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NO WORK WILL BE PUBLISHED IN THIS JOURNAL WITHOUT HAVING PREVIOUSLY RECEIVED THE SANCTION OF GENTLEMEN EMINENT IN LITERATURE.

wife, sitting on long stones at the door. The husband, a tall, meagre old fellow, thrummed upon a wretched guitar, for the diversion of his wife, who seemed to listen with pleasure. "Gentlemen (cried the landlord when he saw we did not stop), I advise you to halt at this place: you won't find a village within three weary leagues of this; and even there, I assure you, you won't be so well served as here: take my word for it, and walk into my house, where I will entertain you handsomely, at a reasonable rate." We suffered ourselves to be persuaded, and approaching the man and his wife, bid them good even; and having seated ourselves by them, began all four to talk of indifferent subjects. The landlord said he was an officer of the holy brotherhood, and his wife was a fat merry dame, who seemed to understand very well how to vend her commodities.

Our conversation was interrupted by the arrival of twelve or fifteen cavaliers, some mounted on mules, and some on horseback, followed by thirty baggage moys loaded with bales. "Ah! what a number of princes! (cried the landlord at sight of so many people,) where shall I find lodging for them all?" In a moment the village was crowded with men and beasts. There was lucky, near the inn, a vast barn, in which the moys and the baggage were disposed: the mules and horses belonging to the cavaliers were put in other places; and for the men, they did not concern themselves so much about finding beds, as in bespeaking a good supper. The landlord, his wife, and a young maid-servant belonging to the house, were not idle; they slaughtered all the poultry in their yard, which, joined to some ragouts made of rabbits and cats, and a plentiful dish of soup composed of cauliflowers and mutton, furnished entertainment enough for the whole company.

Moralez and I looked at the cavaliers, who from time to time eyed us also. At last we entered into conversation, and told them, that if it was agreeable, we would sup in company. They assured us that we could not do them a greater pleasure: so we sat down altogether at table. There was one among them who seemed to be the chief, and for whom the rest, though otherwise very familiar, did not fail to show some deference: it is true, indeed, he kept the upper end, talked in an elevated tone of voice, and even contradicted sometimes, in a cavalier manner, the sentiments of the rest, who, far from replying in the same manner to him, seemed to respect his opinions. The discourse falling, by accident, on Andalusia; and Moralez taking it into his head to praise Seville, this man said to him, "Signor Cavalier, you are making the eulogium of the city where I first drew breath, or at least I was born in its neighborhood, since the town of Mayrena gave me to the world." "I can say the same thing (answered my companion); I was likewise born at Mayrena, and I must certainly know your parents: pray, whose son are you?" "I am (said the cavalier) the son of an honest notary, called Martin Moralez." "Upon my faith (cried my comrade, with emotion), the adventure is extremely singular: you are then my eldest brother, Manuel Moralez." "The very same (said the other); and you are, I suppose, my younger brother, Lewis, whom I left in the cradle when I quitted my father's house?" "That is my name, indeed," (replied my comrade.) Upon which they both got up, and embraced one another with great affection. Then Signor Manuel said to the company, "Gentlemen, this event is altogether marvellous! I have, by accident, met and discovered a brother, whom I have not seen these twenty years and more: allow me to present him to the company." All the cavaliers, who kept themselves standing, out of complaisance, saluted the young Moralez, and loaded him with caresses. Afterwards we sat down again at table, where we remained all night without going to bed; the two brothers sitting by one another, and conversing by themselves about their family, while the other guests drank and made merry.

Lewis, after a long conversation with Manuel, taking me aside, said, "All these cavaliers are domestics of the Count de Montanos, whom the king has lately named for viceroy of Majorca. They are conducting their master's equipage to Alicante, where they are to embark. My brother, who is become steward to that nobleman, has proposed to carry me along with him; and, on account of the reluctance I expressed in leaving you, told me, that if you would accompany us, he would procure for you a good employment. Dear friend (added he), I advise thee not to disdain the offer: let us go together to the island of Majorca: if we find it agreeable, we will stay there; and if we shall be displeased with our situation, we will return to Spain."

I willingly embraced the proposal; young Moralez and I joined the Count's officers, and set out with them from the inn before day. Having by long marches gained the city of Alicante, I bought a guitar, and took off a handsome suit of clothes before our embarkation; thinking of nothing but the island of Majorca; and Lewis Moralez was in the same disposition. We seemed to have renounced sharpening allegories. To tell you the truth, we had a mind to pass for persons of honor among the cavaliers in whose company we were, and that kept a check upon our geniuses. At last we went merrily on board, flattering ourselves with the hopes of being at Majorca in a very little time; but scarce had we

cleared the gulf of Alicant, when a terrible tempest arose. I might in this place of my relation take an opportunity to make a fine description of the storm; to paint the air all on fire, to make the thunder roar, the winds whistle, the mountain billows roll, &c. But all these flowers of rhetoric apart, I assure you, the hurricane was violent, and obliged us to bear away for the point of the island of Cabrera, a desert isle, in which there is a little fort, at that time garrisoned by an officer and five or six soldiers, who gave us a very hospitable reception.

As we were obliged to stay there several days, in order to repair our sails and tackle, we invented different kinds of amusements to pass the time agreeably. Each followed his own inclination: some played at primero, others sought different diversions, and I went to walk through the island, accompanied by those who loved such exercise. We skipped from rock to rock, for the ground was very uneven, full of stones, and very deficient in good soil. One day, while we considered these parched withered places, and admired the caprice of nature, that shows herself fruitful or barren as she pleases, our noses were invaded all of a sudden with a most agreeable smell. We immediately turned to the eastward, from whence that odour came, and perceived with astonishment, among the rocks, a large, round, green spot, surrounded with honeysuckles, even more beautiful and sweet-scented than those that grow in Andalusia. We approached with pleasure those charming shrubs, which perfumed the air all round, and found that they bordered upon the entry of a very deep cavern, which being large and light, we descended to the bottom of it, turning by steps of stone, the ends of which were adorned with flowers, the whole forming a natural winding staircase. When we had got down, we saw several little rills of water, which derived their sources from drops that incessantly distilled from the rocks within, creeping along sand more yellow than gold, and losing themselves in the earth. The water seemed so pure, that we were tempted to drink, and found it so fresh, that we resolved to return next day to the same place with some bottles of wine, persuaded that we should empty them with vast pleasure.

It was with regret we quitted such an agreeable place, and, when we went back to the fort, we did not fail to boast of our discovery; but the commandant cautioned us, as a friend, against returning to the cavern, with which we were so much charmed. "For what?" (said I to him.) "Is there any thing to fear?" "Yes, without doubt (he replied:) the corsairs of Algiers and Tripoli sometimes land on this isle, to water at that spring, and one day surprised two soldiers of my garrison, whom they made slaves." It was in vain for the officer to tell us this with a very serious air; he could not persuade us, for we believed that he jested; and next day I returned to the cavern, with three more of my companions, without providing ourselves with fire-arms, to show that we dreaded nothing. Young Moralez would not be of the party, choosing rather to stay with his brother, and play in the fort.

Having descended, as the day before, to the bottom of the cave, we cooled some bottles of wine, that we had brought along with us, in the rivulets; and while we drank them deliciously, playing on the guitar, and conversing pleasantly together, we saw several men appear at the mouth of the cavern above, with large whippers, turbans, and Turkish dress. We imagined that it was a part of the count's domestics, with the commandant of the fort, who had thus disguised themselves in order to frighten us; and, prepossessed with this fancy, began to laugh, letting no less than ten of them come down, without thinking of defending ourselves. We were, however, soon undeceived in a melancholy manner, and convinced that it was a corsair, who came with his people to carry us off. "Surrender, you dogs (he cried, in the Castilian tongue), or you shall lay all up to the sword." At the same time his followers presented their carbines to us, and we should have undergone a fine discharge had we made the least resistance. We preferred slavery to death, and gave our swords to the pirate, who ordered us to be loaded with chains, and conducted to his vessel, which was not far off: then setting sail, he steered with a fair wind towards Algiers.

In this manner we were punished for neglecting the caution of the officer of the garrison. The first thing that the corsair did was to rifle us of all the money we had. What a fine windfall for him! The two hundred pistoles taken from the young citizens of Placentia, the hundred which Moralez had received from Jerome de Moraydas, and which unluckily I had about me, were all swept away without mercy. My companions had also their purses well furnished. In short, it was an excellent prize. The pirate was rejoiced at his good luck; and the rascal, not satisfied with our plunder, insulted us with his raillery, which we did not feel half so much as the necessity that compelled us to bear it. After a thousand jokes, he ordered the bottles of wine which we had cooled at the fountain, and which his people had taken care to seize, to be brought to him, and began to empty them with his crew, drinking to our health by way of derision.

During this conjuncture, the countenances of my comrades expressed the pain they felt; and their slavery mortified them the more, because they had formed the most delightful idea of their voyage to the island of Majorca, where they had laid

their account with leading a most delicious life. As for me, I had fortitude enough to project a plan of conduct for myself; and, less afraid than my fellows, entered into conversation with the railler, and even returned his jokes with a good grace. Pleased with my behavior—"Young man (said he), I like thy disposition; for, in the main, instead of sighing and groaning, it is better for one to arm himself with patience, and sail with the stream. Play to us a small air, (added he, observing that I had a guitar;) let us see what thou canst do." I obeyed him as soon as he had ordered my arms to be unchained, and began to thrum upon my guitar in such a manner as acquired his applause. I had indeed learned under the best master in Madrid, and played on that instrument pretty well. I sang likewise, and my voice gave no less satisfaction. All the Turks in the vessel expressed the pleasure they felt in hearing me, by gestures of admiration: a circumstance from which I concluded that their taste for music was not extremely delicate. The pirate whispered to me that I should not be an unhappy slave; and that one of my talents might depend upon an employment that would make my captivity very supportable.

I felt some joy at these words; but, flattering as they were, I had abundance of uneasiness on the score of this occupation, with the promise of which the corsair regaled me. When we arrived at the port of Algiers,* we saw a great number of people assembled to receive us, who, as soon as we were landed, shouted with joy: besides, the air resounded with the confused noise of trumpets, Moresco flutes, and other instruments used in that country, which formed a symphony more loud than agreeable. The cause of these rejoicings was a false report which had spread through the city, importing that the renegade Mehemet (this was our pirate's name) had perished in attacking a large Genoese vessel; so that all his friends, informed of his return, were eager in their expressions of joy.

We had no sooner set foot on shore, than I and my companions were conducted to the palace of Dey Solyman, where a Christian secretary, examining us one by one, asked our names, ages, country, religion, and qualifications. Then Mehemet, showing me to the Dey, extolled my voice, and assured him that I played ravishingly on the guitar. This was enough to determine Solyman to choose me for his own service: accordingly I was detained in his seraglio, while the other captives were led into a public place, and sold according to custom. What Mehemet had foretold to me in the vessel came to pass. My condition was very happy; far from being abandoned to jailers, or employed in laborious work, I was, by order of Solyman, disposed of in a particular place, with five or six slaves of quality, who expected every moment to be redeemed, and whose tasks were far from being painful. My business was to water the orange-trees and flowers in the garden, and I could not have been favored with a more agreeable occupation.

Solyman was a man about forty years of age, well-shaped, very polite, and, for a Turk, mighty gallant. His chief favorite was a Cachemirian woman, who, by her understanding and beauty, had acquired an absolute dominion over him. He loved her even to adoration, and treated her every day with some entertainment or other: sometimes with a concert of vocal and instrumental music, and sometimes with a comedy in the Turkish taste: that is to say, a dramatic poem, in which modesty and decorum were as little regarded as the rules of Aristotle. The favorite, whose name was Farrukh-naz, was passionately fond of these diversions, and even made her women sometimes represent Arabian pieces before the Dey; wherein she herself played a part, and charmed all the spectators by the grace and vivacity of her action. I being one day among the musicians, at a representation of this kind, Solyman ordered me to play upon the guitar, and sing alone, between the acts. I had the good fortune to please, was very much applauded, and the favorite seemed to look upon me with a favorable eye.

The very next day, while I was busied in watering the orange-trees in the garden, an eunuch passing by me, without stopping or speaking one word, dropped a billet at my feet: I took it up in a confusion made up of fear and joy. I lay down upon the ground, that I might not be seen from the windows of the seraglio, and concealing myself behind the boxes in which the orange-trees were planted, opened the letter, in which I found a pretty valuable diamond, and these words in good Castilian:

"Young Christian, thank heaven for thy captivity—Love and fortune will make thee happy—Love, if thou art sensible to the charms of a beautiful woman: and fortune, if thou hast courage to despise the greatest danger."

I did not in the least doubt that the letter came from the favorite Sultana: the style and diamond persuaded me that she must have been the author.—Besides that I am not na-

* Algiers, a city on the coast of Barbary, possessed by the Moors, who are at perpetual war with the Spaniards, and under the protection of the Turks.

† Cachemire is a country under the dominion of the Great Mogul, called the Indian Paradise; remarkable for the beauty and wit of its women.

turally very timorous, the vanity of being in the good graces of a grand signor's mistress, and more than that, the hope of getting from her four times as much money as would be necessary for my ransom, made me form the design of achieving that adventure, whatever dangers might attend it. I continued my work, musing upon the means of entering the apartment of Farrukhaz, or rather expecting that she would pave the way: for I concluded that she would not stop there, but at least be at more than half the trouble. I was not mistaken: the same evening that passed me before repassed an hour after, and said, "Christian, hast thou considered, and wilt thou have the boldness to follow me?" I answered "Yes." He replied, "Very well: heaven preserve thee. Thou shalt see me again to-morrow morning." So saying, he retired. Next day he appeared accordingly about eight in the morning, and beckoned me to him. I obeyed the signal, and he conducted me into a hall, where there was a large piece of linen, which another eunuch and he had brought thither, and which they were to carry to the Sultana, for the decoration of an Arabian piece that she was preparing for the entertainment of the Dey.

The two eunuchs having spread out the cloth, laid me along within it, and at the hazard of my being suffocated, rolled it up again, with me in the middle: then, each taking one end of it, carried me thus, unquestioned, into the bed-chamber of the fair Cachemir, who had nobody with her but an old slave devoted to her pleasure. When the two unrolled the cloth, Farrukhaz, at sight of me, broke forth into transports of joy, that well discovered the genius of women in that country. Bold as I naturally was, I could not see myself transported, all of a sudden, into the secret apartment of the women, without being seized with fear. The lady easily perceived it, and, in order to dissipate my apprehension, said, "Young man, fear nothing: Solyman is gone o his country-house, where he will remain all day; so that we may converse together freely."

Encouraged by these words, I assumed a look that redoubled the favorite's joy. "I am pleased with your person (said she), and intend to soften the rigor of your slavery: I believe you worthy of the sentiments I have conceived for you; for though you are in the dress of a slave, you have a noble and gallant air, that shows you are not of the vulgar. Speak freely, and tell me who you are. I know that captives of a noble birth disguise their rank, that they may be redeemed at an easier rate; but you have no occasion to behave in that manner with me: I should even be affronted at such a precaution, since I premise to set you at liberty. Be sincere, therefore, and confess that you are a young man of a good family." "Truly, Madam (I replied), it would be ingratitude in me to repay your generosity with dissimulation; and since you absolutely charge me to reveal my quality, you must be satisfied. I am the son of a Spanish grandee." Perhaps I spoke truth: at least the Sultana believed it; and, pleased that she had thrown her eyes upon a gentleman of importance, assured me that it should not be her fault if we did not see one another often in private. We had a pretty long conversation, and I never saw a more engaging woman: she understood several languages, especially the Castilian, which she spoke pretty well. When she judged it time for us to part, I went, by her order, into an osier basket, covered with a flowered silk, the work of her own hand. Then the two slaves who brought me in were called, and carried me out as a present from the favorite to the Dey: a thing sacred to all the men who are intrusted with the guard of the women.

Farrukhaz and I found other means of seeing one another, and that amiable captive inspired me with almost as much love for her as she had for me. Our intelligence remained secret during two months, although it is very difficult in a seraglio to conceal the mysteries of love so long from the Arguses that watch it. But an unlucky accident disconcerted our small affairs, and my fortune was entirely changed. One day, when I had been introduced to the Sultana in the body of an artificial dragon, that was made for a show, and was conversing with her, Solyman, who I imagined was busy in the country, interrupted us, and entered so hastily into the apartment of his favorite, that the old slave scarce had time to advertise us of his arrival; consequently I had no leisure to conceal myself, and therefore was the first object that presented itself to the view of the Dey.

He seemed astonished at the sight of me, and his eyes kindled with fury. I looked upon myself as one that touched his last moment, and already imagined myself under the torture. As for Farrukhaz, I perceived that she was terrified indeed; but, instead of owning her crime, and asking pardon, she said to Solyman, "Signor, before you pronounce my sentence, deign to hear my defence: appearances doubtless condemn me, and I seem to have committed a piece of treason worthy of the most horrible chastisement. I have brought this young captive hither, and in order to introduce him into my apartment, have used the same artifice which I would have employed if I had entertained a violent passion for him. Nevertheless, I take our holy prophet to witness, that, notwithstanding this conduct, I am not unfaithful. I had a mind to converse with this Christian slave, in order to detach him from his sect, and engage him to follow that of the believers. I have found in him such a resistance as I expected; but, however, I have conquered his prejudice, and he has promised to embrace Mahometanism."

I own I ought to have contradicted the favorite, without any regard to the dangerous conjuncture in which I was; but being in the utmost dejection of spirit, affected with the danger in which I saw a woman whom I loved, and trembling for myself, I remained speechless and confused: I could not utter one word, and the Dey, persuaded by my silence that his mistress said nothing but the truth, was appeased. "Madam (said he), I am willing to believe that you have not injured me, and that a desire of doing a thing agreeable to the pro-

phet has engaged you to hazard such a delicate action. I forgive your imprudence, therefore, provided this captive takes the turban immediately." He sent for a Marabout* that instant; I was clothed with a Turkish dress, and did all that was required, without having power to resist. Or rather, I was ignorant of what I did, so much were my senses disordered. How many Christians are there, who would have been as base as I was on such an occasion?

After the ceremony, I quitted the seraglio, under the name of Sidy Hali, to exercise a small employment bestowed upon me by Solyman. I never saw the Sultana again; but one of her eunuchs coming to me one day, brought from her a present of jewels worth two thousand sultanis of gold, with a billet, in which the lady assured me that she would never forget my generous complaisance in suffering myself to be made a Mahometan in order to save her life. Truly, besides the presents I received from Farrukhaz, I obtained through her an employment more considerable than the first, and in less than seven years became one of the richest renegades in the city of Algiers.

You may well believe that if I assisted at the prayers which the Mussulmen put up in their mosques, and fulfilled the other duties of their religion, it was only out of pure grimace. I preserved a determined resolution to re-enter into the bosom of the church; and, for that purpose, to withdraw one day into Spain or Italy with the riches which I should amass. In the mean time I lived very agreeably; was lodged in a fine house, had superb gardens, a great number of slaves, and very handsome women in my seraglio. Though the use of wine is forbid in that country to Mahometans, they do not fail, for the most part, to drink it in private. As for my own part, I drank it without ceremony, as almost all renegades do. I remember I had two companions, with whom I often committed a debauch within the night. One was a Jew, the other an Arabian, and both, as I imagined, honest men; so that I lived with them in the greatest familiarity. One evening, I invited them to supper, and a dog, of which I was passionately fond, having died that day, we bathed his body, and buried it with all the ceremony that is observed at the funerals of the Mahometans. In so doing we had no intention to ridicule the Mussulman religion, but only to amuse ourselves, and gratify a foolish whim that seized us in the middle of our debauch, to render the last duties to my dog.

This action, however, had well nigh ruined me. Next day, a man came to my house, and said, "Signor Sidy Hali, I am come hither on an important affair. The Cady† wants to speak with you: take the trouble, if you please, to go to his house immediately: an Arabian merchant, who supped with you last night, has informed him of a certain impiety committed by you, with regard to a dog which you buried. For this reason I summon you to appear this day before that judge, otherwise I give you notice that you will be proceeded against in a criminal manner." So saying, he went away, leaving me thunderstruck with this citation. The Arabian had no cause to complain of me, and I could not comprehend the traitor's reason for playing me this trick. Nevertheless, the thing was not to be neglected. I knew the Cady was a man severe in appearance, but not at all scrupulous at bottom; so I put two hundred sultanis of gold into my purse, and repaired to his house. He carried me into his closet, and said, with a stern look, "You are an impious, sacrilegious, and abominable man: you have interred a dog like a Mussulman: what horrid profanation! Is it thus then you regard our most sacred ceremonies? and did you become a Mahometan only to make a jest of our worship?" "Mr. Cady (I replied), the Arabian who has made such a malicious report of me, that false friend, is an accomplice of my crime, if it be a crime to grant the honors of burial to a faithful domestic—an animal that possessed a thousand good qualities. He loved people of merit and distinction so much, that even in his last moments, as a testimony of his friendship, he has left them his whole fortune by a will, of which I am the sole executor. He bequeaths twenty crowns to one, thirty to another; and, sir, he has not forgot you (added I, taking out my purse); here are two hundred sultanis of gold which he charged me to give you." The Cady, losing his gravity at this discourse, could not help laughing, and, as we were alone, took the purse without ceremony, saying, while he dismissed me, "Go, Signor Sidy Hali; you have done well to inter with pomp and honor a dog who had so much consideration for persons of worth."

By these means I extricated myself out of this affair, which, if it did not make me more wise, rendered me at least more circumspect for the future. I no longer drank with the Arabian, nor even with the Jew; but chose for a companion at my cups, a young gentleman of Leghorn, called Azarini, who was my own slave. I was not like the rest of the renegades, who are generally more cruel to slaves than the Turks themselves: all my captives waited very patiently for their redemption; and indeed I treated them so gently, that sometimes they told me they were more afraid of changing their master, than desirous of liberty, whatever charms it has for people in a state of bondage.

One day the Dey's vessels returned with considerable prizes, bringing in more than a hundred slaves of both sexes, whom they had taken on the coasts of Spain. Solyman kept but a very small number, and the rest were exposed to sale: I arrived in the market-place, and bought a Spanish girl, about ten or twelve years old, who wept bitterly, and seemed in despair. I was surprised to see one of her age so sensible of captivity; and bid her, in Castilian, moderate her affliction, assuring her that she had fallen into the hands of a master who did not want humanity, though he wore a turban. The young creature, whose mind was still engrossed by her

sorrow, did not hear what I said: she did nothing but sob, complain of her fate, and, from time to time, cry with a piteous accent, "O my mother! Why are we separated? I should have patience were we together." In pronouncing these words, she turned her eyes towards a woman between forty and fifty years of age, who stood a few paces from her, and, with a downcast look, waited in sullen silence until somebody should purchase her. I asked the young girl if the person she looked at was her mother? "Yes, alas! Signor (she replied), in the name of God do not part us." "Well, my child (said I), if it is necessary for your consolation that you should be together, you shall soon be satisfied." At the same time I approached the mother, in order to bid her for her; but I no sooner beheld her face than I recollected, with all the emotion you can imagine, the features, the individual countenance of Lucinda! "Just heaven! (said I to myself), 'tis my own mother! 'tis doubtless she herself!" As for her, whether the deep affliction occasioned by her misfortunes made all the objects that surrounded her appear to her as enemies, or that my dress disguised me, or rather that I was much altered in twelve years, during which she had not seen me, I know not, but she did not at all remember me.

Having bought her also, I carried them both to my home, where, designing to give them the pleasure of knowing who I was, "Madam (said I to Lucinda), it is possible that my features do not strike you? Have my whiskers and turban disguised me so much, that you do not know your son Raphael?" My mother, starting at these words, considered my countenance, recollected me, and we embraced one another with great tenderness. I then embraced her daughter, who perhaps knew no more of having a brother than I of having a sister. "Confess (said I to my mother), that in all your theatrical pieces, you have not a recognition so original as this." "Son (answered she, sighing), I was at first rejoiced to see you again, but now my joy is converted into grief. I what a situation, alas! do I find you? My slavery gives me a thousand times less pain than that odious dress." "In good faith, Madam (said I, interrupting her with a laugh), I admire your delicacy, which, to be sure, is very commendable in an actress. Why, good God! mother, you must be greatly altered if my metamorphosis offends you so much: instead of finding fault with my turban, look upon me rather as an actor who plays the part of a Turk upon the stage. Though I am a renegade, I am no more a Mussulman now than when I was in Spain; and at bottom I feel myself still attached to my religion: when you shall know the adventures that have happened to me in this country, you will excuse my conduct. Love was my crime, and I sacrifice to that deity: I am somewhat of your disposition, I assure you. There is still another reason (added I) which ought to moderate your displeasure in seeing me thus situated. You expected to suffer in Algiers a rigorous captivity; and you find in your master a son, tender, respectful, and rich enough to maintain you here in abundance, until we can lay hold of an occasion of returning certainly into Spain. So that you must allow that proverb to be true, which says, 'It is an ill wind that blows nobody good.'"

"Son (said Lucinda to me), since your design to repay one day into your own country, and there abuse the religion of Mahomet, I am comforted. Thank heaven! (continued she), that I shall be able to carry back your sister Beatrice, safe and sound, into Castile." "Yes, Madam (cried I), you shall have it in your power: we will go all three together as soon as possible, and rejoice the rest of our family; for I suppose you have more marks of your fruitfulness in Spain." "No!" (said my mother), I have no other children than you two, and you must know that Beatrice is the fruit of lawful wedlock. Why (I resumed) did you give my little sister that advantage over me? How could you resolve to marry? I have heard you say a hundred times, during my childhood, that you could not forgive a handsome woman for taking a husband." "Every season has its reason, my son, (she replied); men of the most firm resolution are apt to change; and would you have a woman be more constant? I will (added she) recount my history after you left Madrid." Then she made the following narration, which, as it is curious, I will favor you with.

"If you remember it (said my mother), you quitted young Leganez about thirteen years ago: at that time the duke of Medina Celi told me that he would come and sup with me in private one evening: he appointed the day, when I waited for that nobleman, who came accordingly, and I had the good fortune to please him. He demanded the sacrifice of all the rivals he might have; I granted his request, in hopes of being well paid for my next dejection: and my hopes were not disappointed: for the very next day I received from him considerable presents, which were followed by many more, during the course of our correspondence. I was afraid that I should not be able to detain a man of such high rank a long time in my fetters; and this I dreaded the more, because I knew very well that he had escaped from celebrated beauties, whose chains he had broke almost as soon as he had wore them. Nevertheless, far from being every day less and less pleased with my favor, his raptures seemed rather to increase: in short, I had the art to amuse him, and hinder his heart, naturally inconstant, from giving way to its usual levity."

"He had been attached to me already three months, and I had room to flatter myself that his passion would be of long duration; when one of my she-friends and I went to an assembly, where he happened to be with his duchess, in order to hear a concert of vocal and instrumental music. We chanced to place ourselves pretty near the duchess, who was placed to take it amiss that I should presume to appear in a place where she was, and sent a message to me by one of her women, desiring that I would immediately withdraw. I returned an insolent answer, which incensed the duchess so much, that she complained of it to her husband, who came to

* Mirabouts are Mahometan priests.

† The Cady is the civil magistrate in every town in Turkey.

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me in person, and said, 'Retire, Lucinda; though noblemen of my rank attach themselves to such little creatures as you, they must not forget themselves altogether: if we love you more than our wives, we honor our wives more than you; and as often as you have the insolence to put yourselves in commotion with them, you will always have the mortification to be treated with indignity.'

"Luckily for me, the Duke spoke this in a tone of voice so low, that not one word was overheard by the people around us. I withdrew, covered with shame, and wept with vexation for the affront I had received. To crown my confusion, the actors and actresses got notice of the adventure that very evening: one would think these people entertain a demon, who delights in reporting to one whatever happens to another. If an actor, for example, is guilty of some extravagant action in a debauch, or an actress enters into articles with a rich gallant, the company is immediately informed of the circumstance. All my comrades, therefore, knew what happened at the concert, and God knows how they rejoiced at my expense. A spirit of charity, which reigns among them, usually manifests itself on these occasions. I put myself, however, above their title-tattle, and consoled myself for the loss of the Duke de Medina Celi, for he visited me no more; and I learned a few days after, that a Carthusian nun had made a conquest of him.

"When a lady belonging to the theatre has the good fortune to be in vogue, she cannot want lovers; and the passion of a grande dame, though it does not last above three days, greatly enhances her price. I found myself besieged with adorers, as soon as it was known in Madrid that the Duke had forsaken me. Those rivals whom I had sacrificed to him, more captivated by my charms than ever, returned in crowds as candidates for my favor: I received homage from a thousand other hearts, and was never so much in fashion before. Of all the men who courted my graces, a fat German, gentleman to the Duke d'Osuna, seemed the most eager. He had not a very amiable person, but attracted my attention by a thousand piques, which he had amassed in the service of his master, and which he squandered away, in order to be deemed worthy of being in the list of my happy gallants. As long as this worthy admirer, whose name was Brutendorf, had money to spend, I gave him a favorable reception; but when he was ruined, he found my doors always shut against him. This proceeding of mine displeased him, and he came to search for me at the theatre during the play. He found me behind the scenes, and began to reproach me for my ingratitude. I laughed in his face, at which he was enraged, and gave me a box on the ear, like a blunt German as he was: I shrieked aloud, interrupted the representation, appeared upon the stage, and addressing myself to the Duke d'Osuna, who was present with the Duchess his lady, demanded justice for the German behavior of his gentleman. The Duke ordered us to go on with the play, and said he would hear the parties when we had finished the piece. As soon as it was over, I presented myself, in a good deal of emotion, before the Duke, and signified my grievance in a pathetic manner: as for the German, he employed but a few words in his defence; he said, 'That, far from repenting what he had done, he would do it again on the same provocation.' Both parties being heard, the Duke d'Osuna said to my adversary, 'Brutendorf, I dismiss you from my service; let me never see your face again: not that I mind your having struck an actress, but am offended at your want of respect to your master and mistress, by presuming to disturb the entertainment in their presence.'

"This sentence I could not digest: I was mortally piqued, because the German had not been turned away on account of his insolence to me: I imagined that such an affront put upon an actress ought to have been as severely punished as petty treason, and I had laid my account with seeing the gentleman undergo some terrible infliction. This disagreeable event undecoded and convinced me, that the world always makes a distinction between the players and the characters they represent. I was, for this reason, disgusted with the stage, which I resolved to abandon, and go to live at a great distance from Madrid. I accordingly chose the city of Valencia for the place of my retreat, and thither I repaired inognito, with the value of twenty thousand ducats, in jewels and cash: a fortune, as I thought, sufficient to maintain me during the rest of my days, since I designed to lead a very retired life. I took a small house at Valencia, and had no other domestics than a maid-servant and a page, to whom I was as little known as to the whole city. I pretended to be a widow of an officer of the king's household; and said, I came to settle at Valencia, because it had the reputation of being one of the most agreeable places in Spain. I saw but very little company, and observed such a regular conduct, that I was never suspected of having been an actress. In spite of my care, however, to keep myself concealed, I attracted the notice of a gentleman, who had a country-house near Paterna. He was a very well-made cavalier, between thirty-five and forty years of age, but withal a nobleman very much in debt; which is no great rarity in the kingdom of Valencia, more than in other countries.

"This Signor Hidalgo,* finding my person to his liking, wanted to know if I could answer his purpose in other respects: for this end, he uncoupled his spies to make discoveries, and had the pleasure to learn from their report, that, besides some share of beauty, I was a widow of good fortune. He looked upon me, therefore, as a suitable match, and, in a little time, an honest old gentleman came to my house, and told me, from him, that, being equally charmed with my beauty and virtue, he made a tender of his heart, and was ready to conduct me to the altar as soon as I would favor

him with my hand. I asked three days to deliberate upon his proposal, and inform myself of his character; which was so engaging, that although I was not ignorant of his situation, I easily determined to marry him in a short time after.

"Don Manuel de Xercia (so was my husband called) carried me immediately to his castle, that had a very antique air, of which he was not a little vain. He pretended that one of his ancestors had caused it to be built; and from thence concluded that there was not a more ancient house in Spain than that of Xercia. But this title of nobility, fair as it was, had like to have been destroyed by time, for the castle, which they were obliged to prop up in several parts, threatened immediate ruin. How happy, therefore, was Don Manuel in marrying me! more than half my money was employed in reparations; and the rest served to put us in a condition of making a figure in the country. Behold me then (to use the expression) in a new world, changed into the nymph of a castle, and lady of a parish. Here was a metamorphosis! and I was too good an actress, not to support, with dignity, the splendor with which I was invested by my rank. I assumed lofty theatrical airs, which made the village conceive an high idea of my birth. How merry would they have been at my expense, had they known the truth of the matter! the nobility in the neighborhood would have bestowed upon me a thousand taunts, and the peasants abated a great deal of the respect they showed me.

"I had lived happily near six years with Don Manuel, when he died, leaving my affairs in great perplexity, with my sister Beatrice, then going in her fifth year. The castle, which was all the estate we had, was unluckily engaged to several creditors, the chief of whom was one Bernard Astuto,* whose name seemed very well adapted to his character: he practised at Valencia the business of an attorney, which he exercised with consummate skill, having studied the law, in order to qualify himself for cheating with the greatest dexterity. What a terrible creditor he was! a castle under the claws of such an attorney is like a pigeon in the talons of a kite. Accordingly, Signor Astuto, as soon as he understood the death of my husband, did not fail to besiege the castle, which he would undoubtedly have blown up by the mines which chicanery began to prepare, had not my good genius interposed, and ordered it so, as that my besieger became my slave. I had the good fortune to captivate him during an interview we had on the subject of the lawsuit. I spared nothing, I own, to inspire him with a passion for me; the desire of saving my land made me practise upon him all those languishing airs which had often succeeded so well. Notwithstanding all my art, I was afraid of being baffled by the attorney, who was so inguippled in business, that he did not seem susceptible of an amorous impression. Nevertheless, this sullen awkward scrawler took more pleasure in looking at me than I imagined. 'Madam (said he), I know not how to make love: I have already applied to my profession so closely as to neglect the methods and customs of gallantry; but, however, I am not ignorant of the essential part; and, therefore, to come to the point, I assure you, that if you will give me your hand, we will burn the whole proceedings; I will bubble the other creditors who join in the suit against you: you shall enjoy the life-rent, and your daughter the property of the land.' My own interest, and that of Beatrice, did not permit me to hesitate; I accepted the proposal, and the attorney kept his promise. He turned his arms against the rest of the creditors, and secured me in the possession of my castle; and this, perhaps, was the first time of his having befriended the widow and the orphan.

"I became, therefore, an attorney's wife, without ceasing to be lady of the parish. But this new marriage cost me the esteem of the gentry in Valencia. The women of fashion looked upon me as one who had degenerated, and therefore would not visit me; so that I was obliged to confine myself to an acquaintance among citizens: a circumstance that gave me some uneasiness at first, because I had been for six years accustomed to correspond with none but ladies of distinction: but I soon consoled myself, and became acquainted with the wives of a scrivener and two attorneys, whose characters were pleasant enough; there was something ridiculous in their behavior, that diverted me very much. These small gentry believed themselves ladies of some consideration. 'Alas! (said I sometimes to myself, when I saw them forget themselves) this is the way of the world: every one thinks herself better than her neighbor. I imagined that actresses were the only people that did not know themselves; but I find that citizens' wives are not a whit more reasonable. I wish that, by way of punishment, they were obliged to keep in their houses the pictures of their grandfathers: in good faith, they would not place them in the most remarkable apartment.'

"After having been married four years, Signor Bernardo Astuto fell sick, and died without children; so that, with what he had settled upon me at our marriage, and the money I was left in possession of, I found myself a rich widow, and had the reputation of being so. On this report, a Sicilian gentleman, whose name was Colfichini, resolved to attach himself to me, in order to ruin or espouse me, for he left me the choice. He had come from Palermo to see Spain, and after having satisfied his curiosity, waited (as he said) at Valencia, for an opportunity of repassing into Sicily. This gentleman was not more than five-and-twenty years of age, genteelly shaped, though small; in short, I liked his appearance. He found means to speak with me in private, and I will frankly own that I became madly fond of him in our first interview. On his side, the little rogue seemed quite captivated by my charms; and I believe, God forgive me, we should have married one another immediately, had the attorney's death, which was still recent, permitted me to contract a new engagement so soon: but ever since I had fallen into

the state of matrimony, I maintained the punctilio of decorum.

"We agreed, therefore, to defer our marriage for some time, out of decency: in the mean time Colfichini continued his addresses, and his passion, far from abating, seemed to increase daily. The poor young man was not very well provided with cash: I perceived it, and he no longer wanted money: for, besides that I was almost twice his age, I remembered that I had laid the men under contribution in my youth, and I looked upon what I now did as a restitution that acquitted my conscience. We waited as patiently as we could for the expiration of the time prescribed by custom for women to remain in a state of widowhood; and then went to the altar, where we mutually bound ourselves in the indissoluble ties of wedlock: we afterwards retired to my castle, where, I may say, we lived two years, not so much like husband and wife, as two tender lovers. But, alas! we were not destined to be long happy in one another; a fatal pleurisy robbed me of my dear Colfichini."

Here I interrupted my mother, crying, "How! Madam: your third husband dead too! you must certainly be a very dangerous temptress." "What could I do, son? (answered Lucinda.) Was it in my power to prolong the days that heaven had numbered? If I have lost three husbands, I could not help it. Two of them I regretted very much: he for whom I had the least regard was the attorney: as I married him out of interest, I easily consoled myself for his death. But (added she) to return to Colfichini; I must tell you, that a few months after his decease, having a mind to go and see with my own eyes a country-house near Palermo, which he had assigned to me as a jointure in our contract of marriage, I embarked with my daughter for Sicily; but we were taken in our passage by the vessels of the Dey of Algiers, and conducted into this city. Happily for us, you chanced to be on the spot where we were put up to sale, otherwise we might have fallen into the hands of some barbarous master, who would have maltreated us, and under whom we might have passed our whole life in bondage, without your knowing any thing of the matter."

Such was my mother's narration; after which, gentlemen, I gave her the best apartment of my house, with the liberty of living as she should think proper: a permission that she relished very much. She had contracted such a habit of being in love, from the repeated attacks of that passion, that she must absolutely have either a husband or a gallant. At first she cast her eyes on some of my slaves; but Haly Pegelin, a Greek renegade, who came frequently to the house, soon engrossed her attention. She conceived a more violent passion for him than ever she felt for Colfichini, and she was so much mistress of the art of pleasing, that she found the secret of charming him also. I winked at their intelligence, and thought of nothing then but my return into Spain. The Dey having already permitted me to fit out a vessel, to cruise and commit piracy, I was busy in making preparations; and, eight days before they were finished, said to Lucinda, 'Madam, we shall depart from Algiers in a very little time, and lose sight of that place which you detest so much.'

My mother grew pale at these words, and remained speechless: at which, being strangely surprised, "What do I see, Madam! (said I,) what is the meaning of that consternation in your looks? You seem to be afflicted rather than rejoiced at what I tell you. I thought I should have made you happy with the news of every thing's being ready for our departure. Have you no longer any desire then of repassing into Spain?" "None at all, son (answered my mother); I have had so much affliction in that kingdom, that I renounce it for ever." "What do I hear? (cried I, in a transport of grief.) Ah! say rather, that love detaches you from it. O heavens! what a change is here! when you arrived in this city, every object that presented itself was odious to your eyes; but Haly Pegelin has altered your disposition." "I don't deny it (replied Lucinda): I love that renegade, whom I design to take for my fourth husband." "What an abandoned project! (said I, interrupting her with horror,) would you marry a Mussulman? You forget that you are a Christian; or rather, you never was one but in name. Ah! mother, what are you about to do? you have resolved upon your own perdition, by voluntarily embracing that which I was compelled to do by necessity."

I used many more arguments to dissuade her from her design; but I harangued to no purpose: she had formed her resolution; and, not contented with following her own wicked inclination, and quitting me to live with that renegade, she wanted to carry Beatrice along with her also; but this I opposed. "Ah, wretched Lucinda! (said I to her,) if nothing is able to restrain you, at least abandon yourself only to the fury that possesses your imagination; do not drag a young innocent creature to the precipice from whence you intend to throw yourself." Lucinda went away without making any reply, and I believed that a remaining ray of reason enlightened and hindered her from being obstinate in demanding her daughter. But how little was I acquainted with my mother! Two days after, one of my slaves said to me, "Signor, take care of yourself; one of Pegelin's captives has imparted a thing to me of which you cannot take the advantage too soon. Your mother has changed her religion, and to punish you for having refused to let her carry off Beatrice, is resolved to inform the Dey of your intended flight." I did not doubt one moment that Lucinda was capable of doing what my slave mentioned: I had opportunities of studying the lady, and perceived, that by the habit of acting sanguinary parts in tragedies, she was so familiarized to guilt, that she could have caused me to be burnt alive, and, I believe, would have been no more affected with my death, than with the catastrophe of a dramatic performance.

Willing, therefore, not to neglect the advice of my slave, I hastened the embarkation and hired Turks, according to the

* Hidalgo (in Spanish) is a gentleman: literally somebody's son, in contradistinction to those who are the sons of nobody.

* Astuto is a Spanish word signifying craft or cunning.

custom of the corsairs of Algiers when they go on a cruise: but I hired no more than such as were necessary to keep me unsuspected, and set sail as soon as possible, with all my slaves, and my sister Beatrice. You may well believe that I did not forget to carry off, at the same time, all my jewels and money, which might amount to the value of six thousand ducats. When we got to sea we began by securing the Turks, whom we easily chained, because my slaves were more numerous than they; and we had such a favorable wind, that in a little time we made the coast of Italy, and arrived, without the least bad accident, in the harbor of Leghorn, where, I believe, the whole city crowded to see us come ashore. The father of my slave Azarini being among the spectators, by accident or curiosity, surveyed all the captives with great attention as they disembarked; but though he sought among them the features of his son, he little expected to see him again. What transports and embraces were the consequence of their meeting when they recollected one another!

As soon as Azarini had told his father who I was, and what brought me to Leghorn, the old man obliged me as well as Beatrice to lodge at his house. I shall pass over in silence the detail of a thousand things that I was obliged to perform in being re-admitted into the bosom of the church: and only observe, that I abjured Mahometanism much more heartily than I had embraced it. After having entirely purged myself of the gall of Algiers, I sold my vessel, and set all my slaves at liberty; as for the Turks, they were detained in prison at Leghorn, in order to be exchanged for Christians. I received the best of treatment from both the Azarinis, the younger of whom married my sister Beatrice, who was indeed no bad match for him, being a gentleman's daughter, and heiress of the castle of Xercia, which my mother had taken care to farm out to a rich peasant of Paterna, when she resolved upon her passage into Sicily.

Having staid some time at Leghorn, I set out for Florence, which I longed much to see; and whither I did not go without letters of recommendation. Azarini, the father, had friends at the Grand Duke's court, to whom he introduced me as a Spanish gentleman, his ally; and I prefixed Don to my name, imitating in that a great many Spanish plebeians, who, when they are out of their own country, assume that title of honor without ceremony. I boldly, therefore, called myself Don Raphael; and, as I had brought from Algiers a sufficiency to support my dignity, appeared at court in a splendid manner. The gentleman to whom Azarini had wrote in my favor gave out that I was a person of quality; so that his testimony, together with the airs I assumed, made me easily pass for a man of importance. I soon got acquainted with the principal noblemen, who presented me to the Grand Duke, whom I had the good fortune to please: upon which, I bent my whole endeavor to make my court to that prince, and study his disposition. I listened attentively to what the oldest courtiers said to him; and by their discourse discovered his inclinations. Among other things, I observed that he loved raillery, good stories, and sallies of wit. I modelled myself accordingly; and every morning marked in my pocket-book the stories I designed for the day. I had such a number of them in my memory, that my budget might be said to have been full, and yet, in spite of all my management, it was emptied apace in such a manner, that I should either have been obliged to use repetition, or show that I was at the end of my apophthegms; if my genius, fruitful in fiction, had not furnished me with abundance. But I composed tales of gallantry and humor that were very entertaining to the Grand Duke; and as it often happens with professed wits, in the morning I invented bright expressions, which I uttered as unprepared sallies in the afternoon.

I even elevated myself into a poet, and consecrated my muse to the praise of the prince. I freely own, indeed, that my verse was none of the best, therefore not much criticised; but had it been better, I question if it would have been better received by the Grand Duke, who seemed very satisfied with my talents; the matter, perhaps, hindered him from finding fault. Be that as it will, this prince insensibly took such a liking to me as gave umbrage to the courtiers. They endeavored to discover who I was, but did not succeed. Getting notice, however, that I had been a renegade, they did not fail to inform the prince of it, in hopes of injuring my character. But this they could not accomplish; on the contrary, the Grand Duke one day obliged me to give him a faithful narration of my voyage to Algiers; I obeyed, and my adventures, which I did not at all disguise, afforded him infinite pleasure.

"Don Raphael (said he, when I had finished the relation), I have a regard for you, and will give you a mark of it, which will not permit you to doubt of my friendship. I will make you the depository of my secrets; and to begin with an instance of my confidence, I must tell you that I am in love with the wife of one of my ministers. She is the most amiable lady of my court, but, at the same time, the most virtuous: shut up amidst her family, and solely attached to a husband whom she adores, she seems ignorant of the noise her charms make in Florence. Judge you if this must not be a difficult conquest. Nevertheless, this beauty, inaccessible as she is to lovers, has deigned sometimes to hear my sighs: I have found means to speak to her in private, and acquaint her with the sentiments of my heart; but I do not flatter myself with the hope of having inspired her with mutual love: she has never given me cause to form such an agreeable idea: I do not, however, despair of pleasing her by my assiduity, and the mysterious conduct I shall take care to observe.

"My passion for that lady (added he) is known to nobody but herself: for, instead of consulting my inclination without constraint, and acting the sovereign, I conceal the knowledge of my flame from all the world. A piece of delicacy which I

think I owe to Mascarini, the husband of her I love: his zeal, attachment, services, and probity, oblige me to conduct myself with great secrecy and circumspection. I would not plunge a dagger into the bosom of that unhappy husband, by declaring myself the lover of his wife; but wish that he may always remain ignorant, if possible, of the flame that consumes me; for I am persuaded that he would die of grief if he knew the confidence I now repose in you. I conceal my steps, therefore, and am resolved to make use of you in expressing to Lucretia all the pangs I suffer, by the constraint which she imposes upon me: you shall be the interpreter of my sentiments, and I do not at all doubt that you will acquit yourself of the commission to a miracle. Contract an acquaintance with Mascarini; endeavor to gain his friendship; insinuate yourself into his house, and procure the liberty of conversing with his wife. This is what I expect of you, and what I assure myself you will perform with all the discretion and address that such delicate employment requires."

I promised to do all that lay in my power to justify the confidence he honored me with, and contribute to the success of his flame; and soon kept my word with him: I spared nothing to please Mascarini, and accomplished my end with ease. Charmed to find his friendship courted by a man who was beloved of his prince, he met my advances half-way: his house was open to me: I had free access to his lady, and, I dare say, behaved myself so well, that he had not the least suspicion of the negotiation intrusted to my care. It is true, indeed, for an Italian, he was not much addicted to jealousy; he depended upon the virtue of Lucretia, and, shutting himself up in his closet, left me frequently alone with her. I went roundly to work the very first opportunity; entertained the lady with the passion of the Grand Duke, and told her that my sole design in coming to her house was to talk to her of that prince. She did not seem captivated by him; and yet I perceived that her vanity hindered her from rejecting his addresses: she took pleasure in hearing them, without feeling any inclination to answer his desires. She did not want understanding; but she was a woman, and I observed that her virtue yielded insensibly to the superb idea of a sovereign in her chains. In short, the prince had reason to flatter himself, that without employing the violence of a Tarquin, he would see Lucretia subjected to his love. An accident, however, which he little expected, destroyed his hope, as you shall presently hear.

I am naturally impudent among women, having acquired that qualification, I know not whether it be good or bad, among the Turks: Lucretia was handsome, and, I forgetting that I was only to act the part of an ambassador, talked to her on my own score, offering my services with all the gallantry I was master of. Instead of being shocked at my audaciousness, and replying in a rage, she said, with a smile, "You must own, Don Raphael, that the Grand Duke has made choice of a very faithful and zealous minister, who serves him with an integrity never enough to be commended." "Madam (said I, with the same air), don't let us examine things scrupulously; but lay aside those reflections, which I know very well are not at all favorable to me. I abandon myself to my passion; and, after all, do not believe myself the first confidant of a prince, who has betrayed his master in affairs of gallantry; for the great have often dangerous rivals in their messengers of pleasure." "That may be, (replied Lucretia,) but as for my part, I am so high-spirited, that nobody under the degree of a prince shall ever make an impression upon my heart. Conduct yourself accordingly, (added she, growing serious,) and let us change the discourse. I am willing to forget what you have said, on condition that you shall never talk to me again in the same manner; otherwise you may chance to repent it."

Although this was an advice to the reader, of which I ought to have taken the advantage, I did not leave off entertaining Mascarini's wife with my passion: I even pressed her with more ardor than ever to make suitable returns to my tenderness, and was rash enough to take liberties. Upon which the lady, being affronted at my discourse and Mussulman behavior, checked me abruptly, threatened to make the Grand Duke acquainted with my insolence, and assured me that she would desire him to punish me as I deserved. I was piqued in my turn at these menaces: my love changed into hate; and, determined to be revenged upon Lucretia for her contempt, I went in quest of her husband, whom, after he had sworn that he would not expose me, I informed of the correspondence between his wife and the prince, not forgetting to paint her very amorous, in order to make the scene more interesting. The minister, to prevent all accidents, shut up his spouse, without any other form of process, in a secret apartment, where she was guarded by people on whom he could rely. While she was thus surrounded by spies, who hindered her from informing the Grand Duke of her situation, I told that prince, with a melancholy air, that he must no more think of Lucretia; that Mascarini had doubtless discovered the whole affair, since he had taken it into his head to watch his wife; that I could not imagine what had alarmed his suspicion of me, for I thought I had always behaved with a good deal of address; that the lady, perhaps, had confessed the whole to her husband, in concert with whom she had allowed herself to be locked up, in order to avoid those importunities which alarmed her virtue. The prince seemed very much affected at my report; I was touched with his grief, and repented more than once of what I had done: but it was too late: besides, I confess that I felt a malicious joy when I represented to myself the condition to which I had reduced the proud woman who had disdained my passion.

I enjoyed with impunity the pleasure of revenge, which is so sweet to all the world, and in particular to Spaniards, when the Grand Duke being one day in company with five or six of his courtiers and me, said, "In what manner do you think a man ought to be punished, who has dared to abuse

the confidence of his prince, and attempted to deprive him of his mistress?" "He ought (said one) to be tied to the tail of four horses, and torn to pieces." Another was of opinion that he should be mauled to death. The least cruel of those Italians, and he whose sentence was most favorable to the delinquent, said, "That he would be satisfied with causing him to be thrown from the top of a high tower." "And what is the opinion of Don Raphael?" (resumed the Grand Duke.) "I am persuaded that the Spaniards are as severe as the Italians in such conjunctures."

I easily comprehended, as you may believe, that Mascarini had not kept his oath; or that his wife had found means to apprise the prince of what had passed between her and me; and my confusion appeared plain on my countenance. Nevertheless, disconcerted as I was, I answered with a resolute tone, "Sir, the Spaniards are more generous; they would pardon the confidant on such an occasion, and by their goodness raise in his soul an eternal regret for having betrayed them." "Well (said the prince), I find myself capable of such generosity. I pardon the traitor: for I have none but myself to blame for having bestowed my confidence upon a man whom I did not know, and whom I had reason to distrust, after what I had heard of his character. Don Raphael (added he), this is the manner in which I avenge myself: quit my dominions immediately, and let me never see your face again." I withdrew on the instant, not so much afflicted at my disgrace, as rejoiced at coming off so cheaply; and the very day embarked in a vessel that sailed from Leghorn on its return to Barcelona.

I interrupted Don Raphael in this part of his history, by saying, "For a man of understanding, methinks you committed a great blunder in neglecting to leave Florence immediately after the discovery you made to Mascarini of the prince's passion for Lucretia; you should have concluded that the Grand Duke would soon come to the knowledge of your infidelity." "I grant it (replied the son of Lucinda), and notwithstanding the assurance which the minister gave me, of not exposing me to the resentment of the prince, I proposed to disappear in a very short time."

I arrived at Barcelona (continued he) with the remainder of the wealth I had brought from Algiers, the best part of which I had dissipated at Florence in the character of the Spanish gentleman. I did not stay long in Catalonia; for, having a longing desire to revisit Madrid, the charming place of my nativity, I satisfied, as soon as possible, the desire that impelled me. When I arrived in that city, I took furnished lodgings, by accident, at a house where a lady lived, whose name was Camilla, and who, though no minor, was a very engaging creature. I take Signor Gil Blas to witness, who saw her, much about that time, at Valladolid. She had still more wit than beauty, and never had a she-adventurer better talents for deceiving dupes; but she was none of those coquettes who lay up the acknowledgments of their gallants: when she had pillaged a man of business, she shared his spoils with the first sharper she found to her liking.

We loved one another at first sight; and the conformity of our manners joined us so closely, that we soon had every thing in common. Our fortunes, indeed, were not very considerable, and therefore we spent them in a very little time. Neither of us, un luckily, minded any thing but our pleasure, or made the least use of the talents we had live to at our neighbor's expense. But misery at last awakened our consciences, which pleasure had numbed; and Camilla said to me, "My dear Raphael, let us make a diversion, my friend, and renounce a fidelity that ruins us both: you may captivate a rich widow, and I may charm some nobleman: for if we continue faithful to one another, here will be two fortunes lost." "Fair Camilla (I replied), you have anticipated me: I was going to make the same proposal to you. I assent to your scheme, my queen: yes, for the better support of our mutual flame, let us attempt advantageous conquests: the infidelities we shall commit will turn to triumphs in the end."

This convention being made, we took the field, and made considerable motions at first, without being able to encounter what we sought: Camilla could light upon none but beaux; that is to say, gallants who had not a penny in their pockets; and I could meet with no women but such as loved better to levy contributions than to pay them. As our arts were useless in love, we had recourse to stratagems, and performed so many, that our fame reached the ears of the corregidor; and that severe judge for the devil ordered one of his alguazils to apprehend us; but this officer, being as good-natured as the other was cruel, gave us time to quit Madrid, in consideration of a small sum which we bestowed upon him. We took the road to Valladolid, and fixed in that city, having hired a house, in which I lived with Camilla, who passed for my sister, to avoid scandal. At first we kept our industry under the rein, and began to study the ground before we should form any enterprise.

One day a man accosting me in the street, saluted me very civilly, saying, "Signor Don Raphael, do you know me?" "I answered, "No." Upon which he resumed: "But I recollect you: I have seen you at the court of Tuscany, where I then belonged to the Grand Duke's guards. I quitted the service of that prince some months ago, and am come to Spain with an Italian of great finesse: we have been three weeks at Valladolid, and lodge with a Castilian and Galician, who are, without contradiction, two young fellows of honor. We live together by the work of our hands, make good cheer, and amuse ourselves like princes: if you will join us, you shall be agreeably received by my confederates: for you always seemed to me to be a gallant man, of a disposition not addicted to scruples, and a professed brother of our order."

The rogue's frankness excited mine. "Since you speak to me with so little reserve (said I to him), it is but reasonable that I should explain myself in the same manner to you. Indeed, I am not a novice in your profession; and if my mo-

desty would allow me to recount my exploits, you would see that you have not judged too advantageously of my talents: but I will forbear to launch out in my own praise, and content myself with assuring you, while I accept that place in your company which is offered, that I will neglect nothing to approve myself worthy of your choice." As soon as I signed to this ambidexter my consent to augment the number of his comrades, he conducted me to the place where they were, and introduced me to their acquaintance. It was here that I saw, for the first time, the illustrious Ambrose de Lamela. Those gentlemen examined me touching my skill in the mystery of appropriating to one's self with address the effects of another. They wanted to know if I understood the principles of their art; but I showed them a great many stratagems which they did not know, and which acquired their admiration of my ability. They were still more astonished, when, despising the dexterity of my hand as a thing too common, I told them that I excelled in tricks which required the assistance of genius. To convince them of this, I recounted the adventures of Jerome de Moyadas; and upon the simple narration of that affair, they found me such a superior genius, that I was chosen their chief by unanimous consent. I soon justified their choice by an infinite number of knavish designs, which we put in practice, and of which I was, as it were, the informing soul. When we had occasion for an actress to carry on our projects, we made use of Camilla, who performed all her parts to admiration.

About that time, our brother Ambrose, being tempted to revisit his native country, set out for Galicia, assuring us that we might depend upon his return. He satisfied his desire; and on his way back again, going to Burgos, with an intention of striking some stroke, an inn-keeper of his acquaintance introduced him to the service of Signor Gil Blas de Santillane, with whose affairs he did not fail to make him acquainted. "Signor Gil Blas (he added, addressing himself to me), you know how well you did of your portmanteau in our furnished lodging at Valladolid; and I don't doubt that you suspected Ambrose of being the chief instrument of that theft. And you was in the right: for at your arrival he came and laid your situation before us, and we, the gentlemen undertakers, regulated ourselves accordingly. But you are ignorant of the consequence of that adventure, which I will therefore let you know. Ambrose and I carried off your portmanteau, and, mounting your mules, took the road to Madrid, without incurring ourselves with Camilla or the rest of our comrades, who, without doubt, were as much surprised as you at our non-appearance next day."

On the second day we changed our design, and, instead of going to Madrid, which I had not quitted without cause, we passed by Zeberos, and continued our route as far as Toledo. In this city, our first care was to dress ourselves like gentlemen: then giving ourselves out for two brothers of Galicia, who travelled out of curiosity, we soon became acquainted with persons of character. As I had been so much accustomed to act the man of quality, I was easily mistaken for such, and people being usually dazzled by expense, we imposed upon every body by the gallant treats we began to give to the ladies. Among the women whom I visited, there was one who touched my heart: I found her fairer than Camilla, and a good deal more young; I was desirous of knowing who she was, and learned that her name was Violante, and that her husband was a gentleman, who, cloyed already with her charms, pursued those of a courtesan whom he loved. This piece of information was enough to determine me to establish Violante the sovereign lady of my affection.

It was not long before she perceived her conquest: I began to follow her every where, and commit a thousand impertinences to persuade her that I wanted nothing more than to console her for the infidelity of her spouse. The fair one made her reflections on the matter, which were such, that at last I had the pleasure of knowing her approbation of my sentiments. I received from her a billet, in answer to several which I had sent to her by one of those old matrons who are so servicable in Spain and Italy. The lady gave me to understand that her husband supped every evening with his mistress, and did not come home before it was very late. That same night I went under the windows of Violante, and entered into a most tender conversation with her: after which we agreed at parting to enjoy the same opportunity every night at the same hour, without prejudice to the other acts of gallantry which we should be permitted to exercise in the day.

Hitherto Don Balthazar, the husband of my princess, came off very cheaply: but I chose to love naturally, and repaired one evening under the lady's windows, with a design to tell her that I could live no longer if I did not enjoy a tete-a-tete with her in a place more suitable to the excess of my love; an indulgence which I had not as yet been able to obtain. But just as I got to the place, I saw a man come into the street, who seemed to observe me: in effect, it was the husband, who returned from the courtesan earlier than usual, and who perceiving a cavalier near his house, instead of going in, walked to and from the street. I remained for some time unresolved; but, at last, determined to accost Don Balthazar, whom I did not know, and of whom I was so utterly unknown. "Signor cavalier (said I to him), pray leave the street free to me one night: I will do as much for you another time." "Signor (he replied), I was going to make the same request to you: I am in love with a girl whom her brother guards like a dragon, and who lives not above twenty paces from hence, so that I wish there was nobody in the street." "There is one way (said I) of satisfying us both without incommencing either: for, added I (showing him his own house), the lady whom I serve lodges there; and let us assist one another if either of us should be attacked." "With all my heart (he replied), I will go to my rendezvous, and we will back one another should there be occasion." So saying,

he left me; but it was in order to observe me the better, and thus the darkness of the night permitted him to do with impunity.

As for my part, I approached in security the balcony of Violante, who soon appeared, and we began to converse together. I did not fail to insist upon my queen's granting me a private interview in some particular place. She resisted my importunities a little, to enhance the value of the favor which I demanded; then dropping a letter, which she took out of her pocket, "Hold, (said she), you will find in this billet the promise of what you so earnestly desire." She afterwards withdrew, because the hour at which her husband usually returned was at hand, upon which I secured the billet, and advanced to the place where Don Balthazar said he was concerned: but he, having very well perceived what I wanted with his wife, came to me, saying, "Well, Signor cavalier, are you satisfied with your good fortune?" "I have cause to be so, (I replied): and what have you done? has love favored your addresses?" "Ah no! (said he), the cursed brother of the beauty whom I love is returned from a country-house, where I imagined he would stay till to-morrow; and this mischance has balked me of the pleasure with which I flattered myself."

Don Balthazar and I made mutual protestations of friendship; and, to tie the knots of it the faster, made an appointment to meet next day in the great square. After we parted, he went home, but mentioned not a word of what he knew to Violante. Next day he repaired to the great square, where I arriving a moment after him, we saluted one another with demonstrations of friendship, as perfidious on one side as sincere on the other.

Then Don Balthazar made me the confidant of a feigned intrigue with the lady whom he had mentioned the preceding night; recounting a long story that he had invented, in order to engage me in my turn, to tell him in what manner I had become acquainted with Violante. I did not fail to fall into the snare, and confess all with the utmost frankness: I even showed the letter which I had received from her, and read the contents in these words:

"I shall dine to-morrow with Donna Inez: you know where she lives: it is in the house of that faithful friend that I intend to give you a private interview; for I can no longer refuse that favor which you seem to deserve."

"This (said Don Balthazar) is a billet which promises you the accomplishment of your wish; I congratulate you beforehand on the happiness that attends you." He could not help being a little disconcerted while he said this; but he easily concealed his trouble and confusion from me. I was so much engrossed by hope, that I never thought of observing my confidant, who was obliged, however, to leave me, that I might not at last perceive his agitation. He ran to apprise his brother-in-law of this adventure; but I am ignorant of what passed between them: all I know of the matter is, that Don Balthazar came and knocked at the door, while I was with Violante at the house of Donna Inez: and as soon as we learned that it was he, I escaped at a back door before he came in. As soon as I was gone, the ladies, whom the unforeseen arrival of the husband had disconcerted, recollected themselves, and received him with such effrontery, that he suspected I was either concealed, or had made my escape. I cannot tell what he said to Donna Inez and his wife, because it never came to my knowledge.

Meanwhile, without suspecting that I was Don Balthazar's dupe, I went away, cursing him, and returned to the great square, where I had appointed to meet Lamela. I did not find him, however; he had little affairs of his own to manage, and the rogue was more fortunate than I. While I waited for him, I saw my perfidious confidant arrive, who came up to me with a gay air, and smiling, asked news of my interview with my nymph at the house of Donna Inez. "I do not know (said I) what demon, jealous of my pleasures, delights in thwarting them: but while I was alone with my lady, pressing her to make me happy, her husband, whom the devil confound! came and knocked at the door: so that being obliged to get off as fast as I could, I retired by a back door, cursing to hell the troublesome cuckold who broke all my measures." "I am truly sorry for it, (cried Don Balthazar, who felt a secret joy in seeing my vexation,) what an impertinent husband must he be! I advise you to give him no quarter." "O! as for that (I replied), I will take your advice: and I can assure you that his honor shall make its exit this night: his wife, when I left her, bade me not be discouraged at so small a matter: but be sure to come under her window earlier than usual, for she was resolved to admit me into her house: and desired me, at all events, to come attended with two or three friends, for fear of surprise." "What a prudent lady she is! (said he), I will, if you please, accompany you thither." "Ah, my dear friend! (cried I, in a transport of joy, while I threw my arms around his neck,) I am infinitely obliged to you." "I will do more, (he resumed;) I am acquainted with a young fellow who is another Caesar: he shall be of the party, and then you may boldly confide in your escort."

I did not know what acknowledgments to make to this new friend, so much was I charmed with his zeal. In short, I accepted the succor which he offered, and appointing to meet in the twilight under Violante's balcony, we parted for that time. He went to find his brother-in-law, who was the Caesar in question; and I took a turn till the evening, with Lamela, who (though he was surprised at the arbor with which Don Balthazar espoused my interest), distrusted him no more than I: we fell nodding into the snare, which, I own, was unpardonable in people of our experience. When I thought it was time to present myself before Violante's window, Ambrose and I appeared upon the spot, armed with good rapiers; and there we found the lady's husband, with an-

other man, waiting for us without flinching. Don Balthazar accosting me, and showing his brother-in-law, said, "Signor, this is the cavalier whose bravery I extolled so much. Get into the house of your mistress, and let not anxiety hinder you from enjoying the most perfect felicity."

After some mutual compliments, I knocked at my nymph's door, which being opened by a kind of duenna, I entered, and without taking notice of what passed behind me, advanced into a hall where Violante was. While I saluted the lady, the two traitors, who had followed me into the house, and shut the door so hastily after them that Ambrose was left in the street, discovered themselves. You may easily imagine that we then came to blows. Both of them charged me at once; but I found them work enough, and employed them in such a manner, that perhaps they repented they had not chosen a surer conveyance for their revenge. I ran the husband through the body, and his brother-in-law, seeing him out of the question, got to the door, which the duenna and Violante had opened to make their escape while we were engaged. I pursued them into the street, where I rejoined Lamela, who not being able to extract one word from the women in their flight, did not precisely know what to think of the noise he had heard. We returned to the tavern where we lodged, secured our most valuable effects, and mounting our mules, rode out of the city without waiting for day.

Knowing very well that this affair might have had consequences, and that a search would be made at Toledo, which we were in the right to anticipate, we went to bed at Villarubia, at an inn, where, some time after, a merchant of Toledo arrived, in his way to Segorba. As we supped in his company, he recounted the tragical adventure of Violante's husband, and was so far from suspecting us to be concerned, that he boldly asked of him all manner of questions about the affair. "Gentlemen (said he), just as I set out this morning, I heard of the melancholy accident. Search was made every where for Violante, and I was told that the corregidor, who is related to Don Balthazar, has resolved to spare nothing in discovering the murderers. This is all I know of the matter."

Though I was not much alarmed at the search of the corregidor, I resolved to quit New Castle immediately: reflecting that when Violante should be found, she would confess all, and on her description of my person to the judge, people would be sent in pursuit of me. For this reason, the very next day we avoided the highway through precaton: Lamela being luckily acquainted with three fourths of Spain, and particularly with the by-ways through which we could securely repair into Arragon. Instead of going straight to Cuenca, we kept among the mountains adjacent to that city; and, through paths that were not unknown to my guide, arrived at a grotto which looked very much like an hermitage; and, indeed, it was the same to which you came last night for an asylum.

While I was considering the country around, which presented to my view a most charming rural prospect, my companion said to me, "I passed by this place six years ago, at which time that grotto served as a retreat to an old hermit, who gave me a very charitable reception: entertaining me with a share of his provisions. I remember that he was a very holy man, and harangued me with a discourse that had almost detached me from the world: perhaps he is still alive: I will go and see." So saying, the curious Ambrose alighted from his mule, and entered the hermitage, where having staid some minutes, he returned, calling to me, "Come hither, Don Raphael—come and see a very affecting scene."

I alighted immediately, and tying our mules to a tree, followed Lamela into the grotto, where I perceived an old anchorite, pale and dying, stretched at his full length upon a truckle-bed. A white beard, very bushy, covered his whole breast; and in his hands, clasped together, appeared a large twisted rosary. At the noise we made at approaching him he opened his eyes, which death had already begun to close, and after having looked at us for a moment, said, "Whosoever you are, my brethren, profit by the spectacle that now presents itself to your eyes: I have lived forty years in the world, and sixty in this solitude. Ah! how long, at this moment, seems the time which I have bestowed on my pleasures! and, on the contrary, how short does that appear which I have consecrated to penitence and devotion! Alas! I am afraid that the austerities of brother John have not sufficiently expiated the sins of the licentiate Don Juan de Solis."

He had no sooner spoke these words than he expired, leaving us very much affected with his death. These sort of objects always make some impression even on the greatest libertines. But we did not retain it long: we soon forgot what he had said to us, and began to take an inventory of every thing in the hermitage: an employment not very laborious; all his furniture consisting in what you may have observed in the grotto. Brother John was not only provided with furniture, but also kept a very bad larder: for all the provision we found was a few filberts and some crusts of barley-bread, so hard as to be, in all appearance, proof against the gums of the holy man. I say his gums, because we observed that he had lost all his teeth. All that this solitary habitation contained, and all that we beheld, made us regard the good anchorite as a perfect saint. We were shocked, indeed, at one thing: we opened a paper folded in form of a letter, which he had laid upon the table, and in which he begged that the person who should read it would carry his rosary and sandals to the bishop of Cuenca. We did not know with what intention this new father of the desert could desire to make such a present to his bishop. This seemed an outrage against humility, and the behavior of a man who wanted to set up for canonization. And perhaps there was nothing in it but pure simplicity; for I don't pretend to decide the matter.

While we discoursed together on this subject, a pleasant thought came into Lamela's head. "Let us stay (said he) in this hermitage, and disguise ourselves like anchorites, having first buried brother John. You shall pass for him, and I, under the name of brother Anthony, will go begging in the neighboring towns and villages. Besides our being secure from the inquiries of the corregidor (for I don't believe he will think of searching for us here), I have some good acquaintance at Cuenca, which we may cultivate." I approved of this extravagant proposal; not so much for Ambrose's reasons, as out of pure whim, or a desire of acting a part in a play. About thirty or forty paces from the grotto, we dug a grave, in which we modestly interred the old anchorite, after having stripped him of his clothes; that is, a simple robe tied about his middle with a leather girdle; we likewise cut off his beard, to make a false one for me; and, in short, after having performed his funeral, took possession of the hermitage.

We fared poorly the first day, being obliged to live on the provisions of the defunct; but next morning, before day, Lamela set out in order to sell the two mules at Toralva, and returned in the evening laden with victuals, and other things which he had purchased. He brought every thing that was necessary for our transformation; he made for himself a russet gown, and a little red beard of horse-hair, which he fixed so artificially to his ears, that one would have sworn it was the natural produce of his chin. There is not a more dexterous young fellow in the world than he; who likewise weaved the beard of brother John, which he applied to my face, and my brown woollen cap served to cover the artifice; so that there was nothing wanting to our disguise. We found each other so pleasantly equipped, that we could not, without laughing, behold ourselves in this dress, which truly was not very suitable to our real characters. Together with brother John's robe, I wore his rosary and sandals, of which I made no scruple to deprive the bishop of Cuenca.

We had been already three days in the hermitage without seeing a soul appear; but on the fourth two peasants entered the grotto, bringing bread, cheese, and onions, to the defunct, whom they still thought alive. As soon as I perceived them, I threw myself on my bed, and it was no difficult matter to deceive them: for besides that there was not light enough to enable them to distinguish my features, I imitated, as well as I could, the voice of brother John, whose last words I had heard; and they had no suspicion of the cheat: they seemed only surprised to meet another hermit there; which when Lamela perceived, he said with a hypocritical air, "My brethren, be not surprised to see me in this solitude, I have quitted as hermitage I possessed in Arragon, to come hither and attend the venerable and discreet brother John, who in his extreme old age has occasion for a comrade who can provide for his necessities." The peasants gave infinite praise to the charity of Ambrose, and expressed great joy in being able to boast of having two holy personages in their country.

Lamela, with a large havresack, which he had not forgot to purchase, went a begging for the first time in the city of Cuenca, which is but a small league from the hermitage. With a devout appearance which he had received from nature, and the art of making advantage of it, which he possessed in a supreme degree, he did not fail to extort alms from charitable people, with those liberties he filled his havresack. "Mr. Ambrose (said I to him at his return), I congratulate you upon your happy talent of melting the souls of Christians. Egad! one would think you had been a begging brother among the Capuchins." "I have done something else (answered he) than fill my knapsack: you must know I have discovered a certain nymph called Barba, whom I formerly loved, and whom I have found strangely altered; she (like us) has turned devotee, and lives with two or three sisters of the same class, who edify the world in public, and in private lead scandalous lives. As she did not know me at first, 'How! Madam Barba (said I), it is possible that you do not recollect one of your old friends, your admirer Ambrose?' 'By my faith! Señor de Lamela (cried she), I should never have expected to see you again in the habit you wear. By what adventure are you become hermit?' 'I cannot tell you at present (I replied), the detail is somewhat long, but I will come back to-morrow to gratify your curiosity, and bring along with me my companion, brother John.' 'Brother John (said she, interrupting me,) what! the good anchorite who lives in the hermitage near this city? Sure you joke; they say he is more than a hundred years old.' 'It is true (said I to her) that he was once of that age; but he has grown a great deal younger within these few days, and is at present no older than I.' 'Well, let him come along with you (replied Barba), I see there is some mystery in the case.'

We did not fail the next day, as soon as it was dark, to go to the house of those bigots, who had prepared a sumptuous entertainment for our reception. We immediately took off our beards and hermit's dress, and without ceremony told them who we were. On their side, for fear of being indebted to us for our frankness, they showed what false devotees are capable of when they banish grimace. We spent almost all the night at table, and did not retire to our grotto till the dawn. We returned thither again in a very short time; or rather did the same thing (almost every day) during three months: in which time we spent two thirds of our money with these nymphs; but one being suspicious of our characters, discovered the whole, and has informed justice against us, which this day intended to visit the hermitage and secure our persons. Yesterday, Ambrose, while he was begging at Cuenca, met one of our sisters, who gave him a note, saying, "One of my friends wrote this letter to me, which I was going to send to you by an express: show it to brother John, and take your measures accordingly." It was this billet, gentlemen, which Lamela delivered to me in your presence, and which has made us quit so suddenly our solitary habitation.

CHAPTER II.

The council which Don Raphael held with his hearers, and the adventure which happened to them when they designed to quit the wood.

WHEN Don Raphael had ended his narration, which I thought a little tedious, Don Alphonso was so polite as to say it had diverted him very much. Then Signor Ambrose opened, and addressing himself to his fellow-adventurer, "Don Raphael (said he), consider that the sun is set; it will be proper, methinks, to deliberate upon what we are to do." "You are in the right (replied his comrade), we must determine upon the place to which we go next." "It is my opinion (resumed Lamela) that we should set forward without loss of time, reach Requena this night, and to-morrow enter the kingdom of Valencia, where we will give the rein to our industry, and, I foresee, perform some successful strokes." His confederate, who on that subject believed his presage infallible, assented to his opinion: as for Don Alphonso and me, leaving ourselves to the conduct of these honest people, we waited in silence the result of the conference.

It being therefore resolved that we should take the road to Requena, we began to prepare ourselves for the journey: we made another meal like that in the morning; and loaded the horse with the bottle and the remains of our provisions, the approach of night lent us that darkness which we needed for our more secure travelling, and we pushed forward to get out of the wood: but we had not gone a hundred yards, when we discovered among the trees a light that made us very uneasy. "What is the meaning of that? (said Don Raphael), perhaps the ferrets of justice having pursued us from Cuenca, understand that we are in this forest, and are come hither to search." "I don't believe that (said Ambrose); these are rather travellers, who, being surprised by the night, have come into this wood to wait for day. But (added he) I may be mistaken. I will go and reconnoitre while you stay here, and I will be back in a moment." So saying, he advanced towards the light, which was not far off, and approached it softly. Pushing gently by the leaves and boughs that were in his way, and peeping with all the attention which the thing seemed to deserve, he saw on the grass, round a candle that stuck burning in a lump of clay, four men sitting, who had just dispatched a pie, and emptied a pretty large leathern bottle, which they embraced in their turns. He likewise perceived, at some distance from them, a lady and gentleman tied to trees; and a little farther, a chaise with two mules richly caparisoned. He guessed at once that the men were robbers; and their discourse, which he overheard, assured him that he was not mistaken in his conjecture. The four banditti expressed an equal desire of possessing the lady who had fallen into their hands, and talked of casting lots for her. Lamela having fully informed himself of the matter, rejoined us, and made a faithful report of what he had seen and heard.

Upon which Alphonso said, "Gentlemen, that lady and cavalier whom the robbers have bound to trees, are perhaps persons of the first quality; and shall we suffer them to fall victims to the barbarity and brutality of thieves? Take my advice, let us attack these banditti, and put them all to death." "With all my heart (said Don Raphael): I am as ready to do a good as a bad action." Ambrose, on his part, signified his willingness to lend a hand to such a laudable enterprise, for which (said he) I foresee we shall be well recompensed. I dare likewise affirm, that on this occasion I was not at all afraid of the danger; and that no knight-errant ever showed more readiness to succor damsels in distress. But not to conceal the truth, the danger was not great: for Lamela having reported that the arms of the robbers were all in a heap at the distance of ten or twelve paces from them, it was no difficult matter for us to execute our design. We tied our horse to a tree, and approached as gently as possible the place where they were talking with great warmth; and making a noise that helped us to surprise them, we made ourselves masters of their arms before we were discovered; then firing a volley upon them, stretched them all breathless on the spot.

During this execution, the light going out, we remained in darkness; but for all that did not delay to untie the man and woman, who were so much engrossed by their fear, that they had no power to thank us for what we had done in their behalf. It is true, indeed, they did not as yet know whether to look upon us as their deliverers, or as a new troop of banditti, who had not rescued them from the others with any intention to use them better. But we encouraged them, by protesting that we would conduct them to an inn, which Ambrose affirmed was not more than half a league from thence; and that they might there take all necessary precautions for their security in going whither their affairs called them. After this assurance, with which they seemed very well satisfied, we replaced them in their chaise, and brought them out of the wood, leading the mules by the bridles. Our anchorites afterwards examined the pockets of the vanquished, took care of Don Alphonso's horse, secured those that belonged to the thieves, which we found tied to trees near the field of battle; and carrying them all off, followed brother Anthony, who mounted one of the mules, in order to guide the chaise to the inn; at which, however, we did not arrive in less time than two hours, although he had assured us that it was not far from the wood.

Every body in the house being abed, we knocked loudly at the door; upon which the landlord and his wife got up in a hurry, and were not sorry to see their rest interrupted by the arrival of an equipage, which they thought would have spent more money than it did. The whole inn was lighted in a moment; Don Alphonso and the illustrious son of Lucinda offered their hands to help the cavalier and lady out of the chaise, and even served them as ushers to the chamber whither the landlord conducted them. There a great many com-

plaints passed; and we were not a little astonished when we understood that it was the Count de Polan himself, and his daughter Seraphina, whom he had delivered. It is impossible to describe the surprise of that lady, as well as of Don Alphonso, when they recollected each other. The Count took no notice of it, so much was he otherwise engrossed, in recounting to us in what manner the robbers had attacked him; and how they had seized his daughter and him, after having killed his postilion, page, and valet de chambre; he ended with telling us, that he had a deep sense of the obligation he lay under to us; and if we would come to him at Toledo, where he should be in a month, we should see whether or no he was ungrateful.

Nor did the daughter of this nobleman forget to thank us for her happy deliverance: and as Raphael and I imagined we should please Don Alphonso, by giving him an opportunity of talking a moment in private with that young widow, we gratified his desire by amusing the Count de Polan. "Fair Seraphina (said Don Alphonso to the lady, in a low voice), I will no longer complain of the fate that compels me to live like a man banished from civil society, since I have been so happy as to contribute to the important service which you have received." "How! (answered she, sighing), is it you who have saved my life and honor? Is it to you that my father and I are so much indebted? Ah! Don Alphonso! why did you kill my brother?" She said no more; but he easily perceived by these words, and the tone in which they were pronounced, that if he was violently in love with Seraphina, she was no less enamoured of him.

BOOK VI.

CHAPTER I.

The conduct of Gil Blas and his companions, after they quitted the Count de Polan. The important project which Ambrose formed, and the manner in which it was executed.

THE Count de Polan, having spent one half of the night in thanking and assuring us that we might depend upon his gratitude, called the landlord, in order to consult with him about the means of getting in safety to Turin, whither he designed to go. We left that nobleman to take his measures accordingly, and departing from the inn, followed the road that Lamela was pleased to choose.

After having travelled two hours, day surprised us near Campello; upon which we immediately betook ourselves to the mountains which are between that village and Requena, and there passed the day in reposing ourselves, and counting our finances, which were a good deal increased by the money of the robbers; for above three hundred pistoles were found in their pockets. As soon as it was dark we set forward again, and next morning entered the kingdom of Valencia. We retired to the first wood that presented itself to our view, and pushing a good way into it, arrived at a place through which a rivulet of crystalline water gently glided in its way to join the streams of the Guadalquivir.* The shade projected by the trees, and the grass which the place afforded in abundance to our horses, would have determined us to halt here, even if we had not been resolved upon it before. We alighted, therefore, and prepared to pass the day very agreeably; but when we went to breakfast, found very little provision left. We began to want bread, and our bottle was become a body without a soul. "Gentlemen (said Ambrose), the most charming retreats are but disagreeable without Bacchus and Ceres; our provision must be renewed; I will for that purpose go to Xelva, a handsome town not above two leagues from hence; so that the journey will soon be finished." So saying, he fixed the bottle and havresack on one of the horses, and mounting on top of them, went out of the wood, with a dispatch that promised speedy return.

He did not come back, however, so soon as we expected; more than half of the day elapsed, and night was ready to cover the trees with her sooty wings, when we beheld our purveyor, whose stay had begun to give us some uneasiness. He exceeded our expectation by the quantity of things with which he returned laden; he brought not only the leathern bottle filled with excellent wine, and the knapsack crammed with bread and all sorts of roasted venison, but also a great bundle of cloth, which we observed with a good deal of attention. He perceived our admiration, and said with a smile, "I defy Don Raphael, and all the world together, to guess why I have purchased these things." Saying these words, he loosed the bundle, to show the particulars of what he had observed in the gross. He displayed a cloak, and very long black robe; two doublets with their hose; one of those ink-horns which are composed of two pieces tied together by a string, the horn of which is separated from the pen-case; a quire of fine white paper, and a padlock with a large seal and green wax; and when he had exhibited his whole purchase, Don Raphael said to him in a jocular way, "Egad, Mr. Ambrose, it must be confessed you have made a fine bargain. What use, if you please, do you intend to make of it?" "An admirable one (replied Lamela); all these things have cost me but ten doubloons: and I am persuaded that they will bring us in more than five hundred; you may depend upon it I am none of those who incur themselves with useless effects; and to convince you that I did not buy all this like a fool, I will communicate the project I have formed."

"Having furnished myself with bread, (added he,) I went into a cook's shop, where I ordered six partridges, as many pullets and young rabbits to be put to the fire; and while they were doing, a man came into the shop in a rage, and,

* Guadalquivir, a river of Spain, that, taking its rise near the source of the river Tagus, on the confines of Arragon and New Castile, traverses the first of these kingdoms, enters Valencia, waters the capital, and discharges itself into the gulf of that name.

complain loudly of the behavior of a merchant in town, said to the cook, "By St. Jago! Samuel Simon is the most ridiculous merchant in Xelva; he has affronted me in open shop; the covetous wretch would not give me credit for six ells of cloth, though he knows very well that I am a responsible tradesman, and that he can lose nothing by me. Is he not a strange animal? He sells willingly on credit to people of quality, and had rather venture with them than oblige an honest citizen without any risk. Was there ever such madness? Damned Jew! would he were taken in! My wish will be one day accomplished. There are merchants enough of my opinion."

"Hearing the tradesman speak in this manner, and say a great many other things of the same nature, I had a certain forewarning that I should cheat this Samuel Simon. 'Friend' (said I to the man who complained), what is the character of this person whom you mention? 'A very bad one (answered he hastily); I assure you he is a rank usurer, though he affects the manners of a benevolent man. He was a Jew, and turned Catholic; but in his heart he is still as much a Jew as ever Pilate was; for, they say, he is abjured for interest.' I lent an attentive ear to all the discourse of the tradesman; and did not fail, when I came out of the cook's shop, to inquire for Samuel Simon's house. A person showed it to me: I surveyed his shop, examined every thing; and my imagination, ready at a call, sketched out a stratagem which I digested, and which appeared worthy of the valet of Signor Gil Blas. I went to a broker's, where I bought these clothes: one suit for acting an inquisitor, another to represent a scrivener, and the third for playing the part of an alguazil."

"Ah, my dear Ambrose! (cried Don Raphael, interrupting him in a transport of joy,) what a wonderful idea! what a glorious plan! I am jealous of the invention, and would willingly give up the greatest strokes of my life to be thought the author of such a happy scheme! Yes, Lamela, (added he,) I see all the richness of thy design, the execution of which ought to give thee no uneasiness. Thou hast occasion for two good actors to second thee, and they are already found. Thou, who hast the air of a devotee, will act the inquisitor very well; I will represent the secretary; and Signor Gil Blas, if he pleases, shall play the part of an alguazil: thus (continued he) are the cues distributed; to-morrow we will act the piece, and I will answer for its success, unless some of those unlucky accidents happen which confound the best concerted designs."

I conceived as yet but very confusedly the project which Don Raphael liked so much, but the whole was explained to me at supper, and the trick seemed ingenious. After having dispatched part of our venison and made our leathern bottle undergo a copious evacuation, we stretched ourselves upon the grass, and were asleep in a very short time. "Get up, get up (cried Signor Ambrose at day-break), people who have great enterprises to execute ought not to be lazy." "Deuce take you, Mr. Inquisitor (said Don Raphael, waking), how alert you are! that bodes no good to Mr. Simon." "I grant it (replied Lamela), and will moreover tell you I dreamed this night that I plucked the hairs from his beard; is not that a villainous dream for him, Mr. Secretary?" These jokes were followed by a thousand more, which put us all in good humor: we made a cheerful breakfast, and then prepared for acting our several parts. Ambrose put on the long gown and cloak, which gave him all the air of a commissary of the holy office: Don Raphael and I dressed ourselves likewise so as to bear a pretty good resemblance to a secretary and alguazil. We employed a good deal of time in disguising ourselves, and it was past two o'clock in the afternoon when we quitted the wood and set out for Xelva. It is true, indeed, we were in no hurry, as our comedy would not begin before twilight: we therefore went at a very slow pace, and stopping at the city gate, waited there till night.

As soon as it was dark, we left our horses in this place to the care of Don Alphonso, who was very glad that he had no other part to perform. Don Raphael, Ambrose, and I, went immediately into a publican's in the neighborhood; and Mr. Inquisitor going foremost, said to the landlord with great gravity, "Master, I want to talk with you in private." The landlord carried us into a parlor, where Lamela, finding him alone with us, said, "I am commissary of the holy office, come hither upon a very important affair." At these words the publican grew pale, and replied with a faltering voice that he hoped he had given no cause of complaint to the holy inquisition. "Therefore (replied Ambrose) it has no intention to give you any trouble: God forbid that, too prompt to punish, it should confound innocence with guilt; it is severe, but always just: in a word, a man must deserve its chastisements before he feels them. It was not you who brought me to Xelva, but a certain merchant called Samuel Simon, of whom we have received a very bad report: it is said that he is still a Jew, and embraced Christianity through motives purely carnal. I order you, therefore, in the name of the holy office, to tell me what you know of that man. Beware of excusing him on account of his being your neighbor, and perhaps your friend: for I declare, if I perceive in your evidence the least reserve, you yourself are a lost man. Come, secretary, (added he, turning to Raphael,) do your duty."

Mr. Secretary, who already had his paper and ink-horn in his hand, sat down at a table, and prepared with the most serious air in the world to write the deposition of the landlord, who, on his part, protested that he would not betray the truth. "Well then (said the commissary inquisitor to him), let us begin: answer only to my questions: I ask no more. Do you see Samuel Simon frequent the church?" "It is what I have not observed (said the publican), I don't remember to have seen him at church." "Good! (cried the inquisitor,) Write that he is never seen at church." "I don't say so, Mr. Commissary, (replied the landlord,) I only say that I ne-

ver saw him there: he may be in the same church with me, though I don't perceive him." "Friend (said Lamela), you must not, in your examination, excuse Samuel Simon: I have told you the consequences of it. You must mention only those things that are against him, and not one word in his favor." "If that be the case, Signor Licenciante (resumed the landlord), you can't reap much from my deposition; I am not acquainted with the merchant in question, therefore can say neither good nor ill of him; but if you want to know how he lives in his own family, I will go and call Gaspard, his 'prentice, whom you may interrogate: he comes here sometimes to make merry with his friends; and such a tongue! he will discover the whole life and conversation of his master, and, I warrant it, find employment enough for your secretary."

"I like your frankness (said Ambrose), and you show your zeal for the holy office by informing me of a man acquainted with the morals of Simon. I will report you to the inquisition. Make haste, then (continued he), and bring hither that same Gaspard whom you mention. But do things discreetly, that his master may have no suspicion of what passes." The publican acquitted himself of his commission with great secrecy and diligence, and brought along with him the merchant's 'prentice, who was just such a very talkative young fellow as we wanted. "Welcome, child (said Lamela to him), you see in me an inquisitor, nominated by the holy office to take informations against Samuel Simon, who is accused of Judaism. You live with him, and of consequence are witness to the greatest part of his behavior. I believe it is unnecessary to advertise you of the obligation you are under to declare all that you know of him, when I order you to do so in the name of the holy inquisition." "Signor Licenciante (replied the young man), I am very ready to satisfy you on that head, without being commanded in the name of the holy office. If my master was to take me for his text, I am persuaded that he would not spare me; I will therefore deal as plainly with him, and tell you, in the first place, that he is a close lunk, whose true sentiments it is impossible to discover: one who affects all the exterior of a holy man, but has not one scruple of virtue at bottom. He goes every evening to the house of a little Abigail."

"I am glad to hear that, (said Ambrose, interrupting him,) and I see, by what you say, that he is a man of bad morals: but answer precisely to the questions I am going to ask. I am particularly enjoined to know what are his sentiments with respect to religion. Tell me, do you eat pork in your house?" "I don't think (replied Gaspard) that we have eat of it twice during the whole year that I have lived with him." "Very well (resumed master inquisitor): write, secretary, that pork is never eaten in the house of Samuel Simon. But, to make amends for that (continued he), you doubtless eat lamb sometimes." "Yes, sometimes (replied the 'prentice) we had some, for example, last Easter." "A lucky epocha! (cried the commissary:) write, secretary, that Simon keeps the passover. This goes on excellently well, and methinks, we have received good intelligence."

"Besides, you must tell me, friend (added Lamela), if you have never seen your master caress little children." "A thousand times (replied Gaspard): when he sees little boys pass by his shop, if they are at all handsome, he stops and fondles them." "Write, master secretary (said the inquisitor, interrupting him), that Samuel Simon is violently suspected of detaching Christian children into his house, in order to cut their throats. A fine proselyte indeed! Oho! Mr. Simon, you shall have to do with the holy office, take my word for it: you must not imagine that you will be allowed to make your barbarous sacrifices with impunity. Courage! zealous Gaspard (said he to the 'prentice), declare all that you know of the matter; and give us to understand that this false Catholic is more attached than ever to the Jewish customs and ceremonies. Does not he spend one day of the week in total inaction?" "No (answered Gaspard), I have not observed that: I only perceive that on some days he shuts himself up in his closet, where he remains a long time." "Ah ha! (cried the commissary,) he keeps the sabbath as sure as I am an inquisitor. Mark, secretary, mark that he religiously observes the fast of the sabbath. Ah! the abominable wretch! I have only one thing more to ask. Does not he speak also of Jerusalem?" "Very often (replied the young man), he relates to us the history of the Jews, and in what manner the temple of Jerusalem was destroyed." "Right! (said Ambrose.) Master secretary, let not this piece of intelligence escape you: write in large characters, that Samuel Simon breathes nothing but the restoration of the temple; and that he meditates night and day the re-establishment of his nation. I do not want to know any more; therefore it is needless to ask any more questions: what the trusty Gaspard has deposed is enough to bring a whole synagogue to the stake."

Master commissary of the holy office having interrogated the 'prentice in this manner, told him he might retire: but ordered him, in the name of the holy inquisition, to conceal from his master every title of what had passed. Gaspard, having promised to obey, took his leave; and we did not tarry long after he went out, but leaving the public house as gravely as we had entered, went and knocked at the door of Samuel Simon, who opened it with his own hand; and if he was astonished to see three such figures as we were, he was much more so, when Lamela, being spokesman, said to him, with an imperious tone, "Mr. Samuel, I command you, in the name of the holy inquisition, of which I have the honor to be commissary, to deliver into my hand, this instant, the key of your closet: I want to see if I cannot find something to justify the informations which have been presented to us against you."

The merchant, confounded at these words, reeled two steps backward, as if he had received a blow on the stomach. Far from suspecting us of any trick, he believed implicitly that

some secret enemy wanted to subject him to the suspicion of the holy office; perhaps too, knowing himself to be no good Catholic, he had cause to be afraid of an information. Be that as it will, I never saw a man more disconcerted: he obeyed without resistance, and opened his closet with all the respect that a man could show who was in terror of the inquisition. "At least, (said Ambrose, while he went in,) at least you receive the orders of the holy office without contumacy. But (added he) retire into another room, and leave me at liberty to perform my function." Samuel was as obedient to this order as to the first: he remained in his shop, while we three entered his closet, and began to search for his cash, which we easily found; for it was in an open coffer, and in much greater quantity than we could carry off, consisting of a great number of bags piled upon one another; and the whole in silver. We should have liked gold better; but things being as they were, we were fain to accommodate ourselves to necessity, and fill our pockets with ducats. We stuffed our breeches with them, and crammed them into every other part which we judged proper to conceal them. In short, we were heavily laden, though our cargo did not appear; and this was owing to the address of Ambrose and Don Raphael, who, by their behavior on this occasion, let me see that there is nothing like a man being master of his trade."

After having done our business so successfully, we came out of the closet, and for a reason that the reader may easily guess, master inquisitor took out his padlock, and fixed it to the door with his own hand, then applying the seal, said to Simon, "Master Samuel, I forbid you, in the name of the holy inquisition, to touch this padlock, as well as the seal, which you are bound to respect, since it is the true seal of the holy office. I will return at the same hour to-morrow, in order to take it off, and bring further orders for you." So saying, he made him open the street door, through which we joyfully passed, one after another. When we had gone about fifty yards, we began to walk with such speed and nimbleness, that we scarce touched the ground, notwithstanding the burdens which we carried. We soon got out of town, and, remounting our horses, pushed towards Segorba, giving thanks to the god Mercury for such a happy event."

CHAPTER II.

The resolution which Don Alphonso and Gil Blas formed after this adventure.

We travelled all night, according to our ordinary custom, and found ourselves at break of day near a little village two leagues from Segorba. As we were all fatigued, we willingly quitted the highway, to get among some willows, which we perceived at the bottom of a little hill, ten or twelve hundred paces from the village, in which we did not think proper to stop. We found that the willows yielded an agreeable shade, being watered by a small rivulet; and the place suiting our taste, we resolved to spend the day in it. Alighting, therefore, we unbridled our horses to let them feed, and lay down upon the grass, where we took a little repose. We then emptied our knapsack and leathern bottle, and having made a plentiful breakfast, counted all the money which we had taken from Samuel Simon, and which amounted to three thousand ducats; so that, with this sum, and what we had before, we might have boasted of having a pretty good stock."

As it was necessary for some of us to go and buy provision, Ambrose and Don Raphael, having quitted their dress of inquisitor and secretary, said that they would take charge upon themselves; that the adventure of Xelva had only whetted their appetite; that they longed to be at Segorba, to see if some occasion would not offer of striking a new stroke. "You have nothing to do (added the son of Lucinda) but wait for us under these willows; we will not tarry, but rejoin you in a very short time." "Signor Don Raphael (cried I, laughing), bid us rather wait for you till doomsday; if you leave us now, I believe we need not expect to see you sooner." "We are affronted by your suspicion (replied Signor Ambrose), but we deserve it at your hands; your distrust is excusable, after what we did at Valladolid; we cannot blame you for thinking that we will make no more scruple of forsaking you than of abandoning our comrades in that city: but, however, you are mistaken: the confederates, from whose company we withdrew, were persons of very bad character, and their society began to grow insupportable. We must do justice to people of our profession, by affirming that there are no associates in civil life less divided by interest than they: but when there is not a conformity of inclinations among them, their good understanding may be broke, as well as that of the rest of mankind. Wherefore, Signor Gil Blas (added Lamela), we beg that you and Don Alphonso will have a little more confidence in us; and let not the desire of Don Raphael and me to go to Segorba give you the least uneasiness."

"It is an easy matter (said the son of Lucinda) to rid them of all cause of anxiety: let them remain masters of the cash, and they will have in their own hands good security for our return. You see, Signor Gil Blas (added he), that we come to the point at once. You shall have pledges in your hands, and I can assure you that Ambrose and I will set out without the least apprehension of your giving us the slip. After such a certain mark of our fidelity, won't you trust entirely to our promise?" "Yes, gentlemen (said I), and you may now do what you please." They departed immediately with the leathern bottle and knapsack, leaving me under the willows with Don Alphonso, who, after they were gone, said to me, "Signor Gil Blas, I must disclose my sentiments to you. I upbraid myself with having had the complaisance to come so far with two sharpers: you cannot imagine how often I have repented of this my conduct. Yesterday, while I took care of the horses, I made a thousand mortifying reflections: I considered that it ill became a

young man, who has principles of honor, to live with such wicked wretches as Don Raphael and Lamela: that if, unluckily, one day, which may not be far off, a trick should miscarry, by which we shall fall into the hands of justice, I shall be shamefully punished with them as a thief, and undergo the most infamous chastisement. These images incessantly occur to my fancy; and I own I have resolved, that I may no longer be an accomplice of their misdemeanors, to separate from them for ever. I don't believe (continued he) that you will disapprove of my design." "No, I'll assure you (answered I), though you have seen me act the part of an algauxil, in the comedy of Samuel Simon, don't imagine that these sorts of pieces are to my taste. I take heaven to witness, that while I played such a fine part, I said within myself, 'In faith, Mr. Gil Blas, if justice should now come and seize you by the collar, you would richly deserve the salary which she would bestow.' I feel myself, therefore, no more disposed than you, Signor Don Alphonso, to remain longer in such good company; and if you will give me leave, I will accompany you. When the gentlemen return, we will demand our share of the finances, and to-morrow morning, or this very night, bid them an eternal adieu."

The beautiful Seraphina's lover approved of my proposal: "Let us (said he) get into Valencia, and embark for Italy, where we may engage in the Venetian service. Is it not better to carry arms than lead this base guilty life? we shall even be in a condition to make a pretty good figure with the money which we have; not that I can use such ill-gotten wealth without remorse; but, besides that I am compelled by necessity, if ever I make the least fortune in war, I swear that I will indemnify Samuel Simon." I assured Don Alphonso that I entertained the same sentiments; and, in short, we resolved to leave our comrades next morning before day. We had not the least temptation to profit by their absence, that is, to decamp immediately with the cash: the confidence they had shewn, in leaving us masters of the money, did not permit us to harbor such a thought.

Ambrose and Don Raphael returned from Segorba in the evening; and the first thing they told us was, that their journey had been prosperous; that they had laid the foundation of a stratagem, which, in all likelihood, would be more advantageous than the last. Accordingly, the son of Lucinda was going to inform us of the particulars, when Don Alphonso declared his resolution to leave them, and let them know that I had the same intention. They used all their endeavors, in vain, to engage us to accompany them in their expeditions; for we took leave of them next day, after having made an equal partition of the money, and proceeded on our way to Valencia.

CHAPTER III.

After what disagreeable incident Don Alphonso found his wishes fulfilled, and by what adventure Gil Blas, of a sudden, saw himself in a happy situation.

We pushed forward cheerfully as far as Brunel, where, unfortunately, being obliged to halt, Don Alphonso fell sick of a high fever, with violent paroxysms, which made me afraid of his life. Luckily there was no physician in the place, and I was quit for my fear: he was out of danger at the end of three days, and my care helped to re-establish his health. He showed himself very sensible of what I had done for him; and as we felt a reciprocal kindness for one another, we swore an eternal friendship.

We betook ourselves again to the road, still resolved, when we should arrive at Valencia, to take the first opportunity of a passage into Italy. But heaven disposed of us otherwise. Seeing a number of peasants of both sexes dancing in a circle, and making merry before the gate of a fine castle, we approached to behold their mirth; and Don Alphonso expected nothing less than the surprise with which he was seized all of a sudden. He perceived the Baron de Steinbach, who no sooner knew him again, than he ran to him with open arms, saying, in a transport of joy, "Ah, Don Alphonso! is it you? what an agreeable encounter is this! while inquiry is made after you all over the kingdom, chance presents you to my view."

My companion, alighting immediately, ran and embraced the Baron, whose joy seemed immoderate. "Come, my son, (said the good old man to him,) you will now know who you are, and enjoy the most perfect happiness." So saying, he carried him into the castle, which I likewise entered along with them; for while they embraced one another, I had alighted and tied our horses to a tree. The master of the castle was the first person whom we met. He was a man of about fifty years of age, and of a very engaging aspect: "Signor (said the Baron de Steinbach, presenting Don Alphonso to him), behold your son." At these words, Don Cesar de Leyva (so was the master of the castle called) threw his arms about Alphonso's neck, and weeping with joy, "My dear son (said he), you see in me the author of your being: if I have let you remain so long in ignorance of your birth, believe me, I did it in that a cruel violence to myself: I have a thousand times sighed with sorrow; but I could not do otherwise. I married your mother through inclination, though she was of a birth inferior to mine; and lived under the authority of a harsh father, who reduced me to the necessity of keeping secret a marriage contracted without his consent. The Baron de Steinbach alone was in my confidence, and it was in concert with me that he brought you up. In short, my father is no more, and I am now at liberty to declare you my sole heir. This is not all (added he), you shall be married to a young lady, whose nobility equals mine." "Signor, (cried Don Alphonso, interrupting him,) don't make me pay too dear for the happiness which you bestow. Cannot I know that I have the honor of being your son, without learning, at the same time, that you want to make me unhappy? Ah, Sir! be not more cruel than your own father, who, though he did not approve of your passion, was not so severe as to

force you to marry." "Son, (replied Don Cesar,) I don't intend to tyrannize over your affections: but be so complaisant as to see the lady whom I destine for your bed; that is all I exact of your obedience. Though she is a charming creature, and a very advantageous match for you, I promise not to constrain you to make her your wife. She is now in the castle; follow me, and you will own that there never was a more amiable object." So saying, he conducted Don Alphonso into an apartment, whither I attended them, with the Baron de Steinbach.

There was the Count de Polan, with his two daughters, Seraphina and Julia, and Don Ferdinand, his son-in-law, who was nephew to Don Cesar; there were other ladies and gentlemen present also. Don Ferdinand (as was already observed) had carried off Julia; and it was on occasion of the marriage of these two lovers that the peasants of the neighborhood were assembled to make merry. As soon as Don Alphonso appeared, and his father had presented him to the company, the Count de Polan got up, and running to embrace him, said, "Welcome, my deliverer! Don Alphonso (added he), observe the power that virtue has on generous minds: if you killed my son, you have also saved my life. I sacrifice my resentment to you, and give you that Seraphina whose honor you have preserved. In this manner I acquit myself of my obligation." The son of Don Cesar did not fail to testify to the Count de Polan how much he was affected with his generosity; and I don't know whether he felt more joy in discovering his birth, or in learning that he was to be Seraphina's husband. In effect, that marriage was celebrated in a few days after, to the infinite satisfaction of the parties concerned.

As I was also one of the Count's deliverers, that nobleman, who knew me again, assured me he would take upon himself the care of making my fortune; but I thanked him for his generosity, and would not leave Don Alphonso, who made me steward of his house, and honored me with his confidence. Scarcely was he married, when the trick which had been played upon Samuel Simon lying on his conscience, he sent me to the merchant with all the money which had been stolen from him. I went accordingly to make restitution, and began the business of a steward, by doing that which ought to be the end of it.

BOOK VII.

CHAPTER I.

The amours of Gil Blas and Dame Lorence Sephora.

I WENT accordingly to Xelva, to make restitution of the three thousand ducats which we had stole from Samuel Simon: and will freely own, I was tempted on the road to convert the money to my own use, in order to begin my stewardship under happy auspices. This I might have done with impunity; for, had I travelled five or six days, and then returned, as if I had acquitted myself of my commission, Don Alphonso and his father would never have suspected my fidelity. I did not yield, however, to the temptation, which I surmounted like a lad of honor; a victory not a little commendable in a young fellow who had associated with great cheats. There are a great many, who, though acquainted with honest people only, are not so scrupulous; those, especially, who are intrusted with sums which they may keep, without interesting their reputation.

Having made restitution to the merchant, who expected nothing less, I returned to the castle of Leyva, which the Count de Polan having left, had set out again for Toledo with Julia and Don Ferdinand. I found my new master more captivated than ever with Seraphina, his Seraphina enchanted by him, and Don Cesar charmed with the possession of them both: I endeavored to get the friendship of that tender father, and succeeded: I became steward of the family, regulated every thing in it, received money from the farmers, disbursed for the expense of house-keeping, and had a despot power over all the servants. But, contrary to the usual practice of stewards, I did not abuse my power; I did not turn away those domestics who displeased me, nor expected that the rest should be entirely devoted to my will; if they addressed themselves directly to Don Cesar, or his son, when they wanted any favor, far from thwarting their interest, I always spoke in their behalf; besides, the marks of affection which I every moment received from my masters inspired me with zeal for their service; and I had nothing but their interest in view. There was no legerdemain in my administration; and I was such a steward as is not every day to be met with. While I enjoyed the happiness of my condition, love, as if he had been jealous of what fortune had done for me, had a mind that I should owe some favors to him also; and produced in the heart of Dame Lorence Sephora, chief waiting-woman to Seraphina, a violent inclination for master steward. My conquest (to relate things like a faithful historian) gladdened upon her fiftieth year; but a lively look, an agreeable countenance, and two fine eyes, which she knew how to use to the best advantage, might be said to make her still pass for the object of an intrigue: I could have wished only for a few roses in her complexion, for she was extremely pale, a circumstance which I did not fail to attribute to the austerity of celibacy.

The lady practised upon me a long time by looks, in which her passion was painted; but instead of answering her glances, I at first seemed not to perceive her design; by which behavior I appeared to her as a novice in gallantry; a discovery that she did not dislike. Imagining, therefore, that she ought no longer to confine herself to the language of the eyes, with a young man whom she believed less knowing than he was; during the very first conversation we had together, she declared her sentiments in form, that I might not be ignorant of them for the future. This she performed like one who had been at school. She feigned to be disconcerted while she spoke to me, and after having freely expressed all

that she had to say, hid her face, to make me believe she was ashamed of letting me see her weakness. There was no resisting; and though I was determined more by vanity than inclination, I showed myself very sensible of her affection: I even affected to be urgent, and acted the passionate lover so well, that I attracted her reproaches. Lorence reproved me, but with so much gentleness, that while she recommended moderation to me, she seemed not at all sorry at my want of it. I should have pushed things still farther, if the beloved object had not been afraid of giving me a bad opinion of her virtue by granting me a victory too cheap. We therefore parted till another occasion; Sephora persuaded that her false resistance made me look upon her as a vestal, and I, elevated with the sweet hope of bringing the adventure soon to a conclusion.

My affairs were in this situation, when one of Don Cesar's lacquies told me a piece of news which moderated my joy. This young fellow was one of those curious domestics, who make it their business to discover what passes in the family. As he was very assiduous in paying his court to me, and regaled me every day with something new; he came one morning, and told me that he had made a pleasant discovery, which he would communicate to me on condition that I should keep it secret: because it regarded Dame Lorence Sephora, whose resentment (he said) he was afraid of incurring. I was too eager to hear what he had to say, not to promise secrecy; but without seeming to be the least concerned, I asked him, with all the indifference I could affect, what the discovery was with which he intended to entertain me. "Lorence, (said he,) every evening privately admits into her apartment the surgeon of the village, a very stout young fellow, and the rogue always remains with her a considerable time. I am willing to believe (added he, with a satirical smile), that this behavior may be very innocent; but you must allow, that a young man, who slips so mysteriously into a maid's chamber, gives a handle to scandal to be very free with her character."

Although this report gave me as much pain as if I had been actually in love, I took care to conceal my vexation; I even constrained myself so much as to laugh at the news that pierced me to the very soul. But I indemnified myself for that constraint, as soon as I saw myself alone. I cursed, I swore, and mused upon the resolution I should take. Sometimes, desiring Lorence, I proposed to abandon her, without even deigning to come to an explanation with the coquette; and sometimes, imagining that I was bound in honor to banish the surgeon from the house, I formed the design of challenging him to single combat: this last resolution prevailed; I lay in ambush towards the evening, and sure enough perceived my man enter with a mysterious air into the apartment of my duenna. This was necessary to support my fury: I went out of the castle, and posted myself on the road by which the gallant must return: here I waited for him without flinching, and every moment the desire of fighting with him increased. At length, my enemy appeared, and I went forwards some yards like a Drawcansir; but I don't know how the devil it happened, I found myself all of a sudden seized, like one of Homer's heroes, with an emotion of fear that arrested my steps; and I stood as much confounded as Paris, when he presented himself to fight Menelaus. I began to consider my man, who seemed strong and vigorous; and his sword appeared to be of an excessive length. All this had its effect upon me; nevertheless, out of a point of honor, or otherwise, though I saw the danger with magnifying eyes; and, in spite of nature, which made obstinate efforts to make me desist, I had the boldness to advance towards the surgeon, and unheath my rapier.

Surprised at my action, he cried, "What is the matter, Mr. Gil Blas? what is the meaning of these demonstrations? You are pleased to be merry, I suppose." "No, Mr. Barber, (I replied,) you are mistaken; I am in a very serious humor, and want to know whether or not you are as brave as gallant. You must not expect that I will let you possess in tranquillity the favors of the lady whom you visit at the castle." "By St. Come!" (said the surgeon, bursting into a loud laugh,) here is a pleasant adventure. Egad, appearances are very deceitful." From these words, imagining that he was as little inclined to fight as I, I became more insolent, and said, "Friend, that won't pass; don't think that I will be satisfied with a simple denial." "I see then, (answered he,) that I shall be obliged to speak, in order to prevent the mischief which might happen to you or me; and I must reveal a secret, although people of our profession cannot be too discreet. If Dame Lorence admits me by stealth into her apartment, it is with a view of concealing her distemper from the servants: she has an inveterate cancer in her back, which I dress every evening. This is the cause of the visits which alarm you; so that you may henceforth keep your heart at ease. Though, (added he,) if you are not satisfied with this declaration, but absolutely bent upon coming to points, speak the word; I am your man." So saying, he drew his long rapier, which made me shiver, and put himself upon his guard. "Enough, (said I to him, sheathing my sword,) I am not a brute to refuse to hear reason: after what you have told me, you are no longer my enemy; let us embrace."

At this discourse, which showed him that I was not such a devil as I at first appeared to be, he laughed, put up his rapier, gave me his hand: and, in short, we parted the best friends in the world.

From that moment Sephora presented nothing but disagreeable ideas to my imagination: I avoided every opportunity she gave me of conversing with her in private; and that with such care and affectation that she perceived my disgust. Astonished at such a change, she resolved to know the cause;

* St. Come was a physician and martyr; therefore not improperly invoked by the surgeon.

and at length, finding an occasion to speak with me apart, "Mr. Steward, (said she,) pray tell me why you avoid the sight of me; 'tis true, I made some advances, but you made suitable returns. Recollect, if you please, the private conversation we had together: you was then all fire, but now you are all ice. What is the meaning of all this?" This was a very delicate question for a plain man; consequently I was embarrassed me not a little. I don't remember the answer which I made; but it displeased very much, and that was enough. Serapha, though by her sweet modest air one would have taken her for a lamb, was a very tigress when her wrath prevailed. "I thought (said she, darting at me a look full of spite and rage) that I did a great deal of honor to a little fellow like you, in discovering to him those sentiments which noble cavaliers would have gloried in exciting; but I am justly punished for having unworthily abused them to a wretched adventurer." Had she stopped here, I should have thought myself cheaply quit. Her tongue, obedient to her fury, honored me with a hundred epithets, every one more bitter than another. I ought to have heard them in cold blood, and reflected, that in disdaining the triumph of her virtue, which I had attempted, I committed a crime that no woman can forgive. But I was too passionate to bear reproaches, at which a sensible man, in my place, would have laughed; and my patience forsaking me, "Madam, (said I,) you ought not to despise any body: if those noble cavaliers, of whom you speak, had seen your back, I am sure their curiosity would have proceeded no farther." I had no sooner uttered this repartee, than the furious duenna gave me the rudest box on the ear that ever an affronted woman bestowed. I did not wait for a second; but, by a speedy flight, avoided a shower of blows, that would certainly have fallen upon my carcass. I thanked heaven when I found myself extricated out of this troublesome affair; and imagined I had nothing more to fear, since the lady had revenged herself. I thought that, for her own honor, she would never mention the adventure; and indeed, fifteen days elapsed before I heard any thing of the matter. I myself began to forget it, when I understood that Serapha was ill: I was humane enough to be afflicted at the news: I pitied the lady; and believing that, not being able to overcome a passion so ill requited, she had fallen a victim to her unhappy love, I reflected with sorrow that I was the cause of her indisposition, and at least lamented the duenna, if I could not love her. How much was I mistaken in my opinion! her tenderness changed into hate; and, at that time, her whole study was to do me mischief.

One morning, being alone with Don Alphonso, and observing that young gentleman pensive and sad, I begged, in a respectful manner, to know the cause. "I am chagrined (said he) to find Seraphina weak, ungrateful, and unjust. You are astonished at this information, (added he, perceiving that I listened with surprise,) and yet nothing is more true. I don't know what cause you may have given dame Lorena to hate you; but you are assuredly become so odious to her, that if you don't leave the castle with the utmost dispatch, her death, she says, will be inevitable. You ought not to doubt that Seraphina, who has a regard for you, at first revolted against a hate which she could not gratify without injustice and ingratitude. But in short, she is a woman: she has a tender affection for Serapha, who brought her up; and that governante is a sort of a mother to her, whose death she would reproach herself with, if she was not weak enough to satisfy his desire: as for my part, notwithstanding the love that attaches me to Seraphina, I shall never have the base complaisance to adhere to her sentiments on this subject. Perish all the duennas in Spain, before I consent to the removal of a young man whom I consider more as a brother than a domestic."

Alphonso having spoke thus, I said to him, "Signor, I am born to be the sport of Fortune: I thought she would have ceased to persecute me in your house, where every thing flattered me with quiet and happy days: but how agreeable soever my situation may be, I find I must give it up."

"Not at all, (cried the generous son of Don Cesar;) leave me to make Seraphina hear reason: it shall never be said that you have been sacrificed to the caprice of a duenna, to whom too much consideration has been paid in other respects."

"Sir, (said I,) you will only provoke Seraphina, in resisting her will. I had much rather retire, than by a longer stay in this place run the risk of breeding any division between such a happy pair: that would be a misfortune for which I should never be consoled."

Don Alphonso forbade me to take any such resolution: and I saw him so fixed in the design of supporting me, that Lorena would undoubtedly have met with a rebuff if I had been minded to oppose her. At certain times, being piqued against the duenna, I was tempted to expose her; but when I came to consider, that in revealing her shame, I should stab the heart of a poor creature whose indisposition I was the occasion of, and that two incurable distempers visibly conducted her to the grave, my resentment was changed into compassion; and I concluded, that since I was such a dangerous mortal, I ought in conscience to re-establish, by my retreat, the tranquillity of the castle. This resolution I executed the very next morning, before day, without bidding adieu to my two masters, lest, through friendship for me, they should oppose my departure. I contented myself with leaving in my chamber a writing, wherein was contained an exact account of my administration.

CHAPTER II.

The fate of Gil Blas after he quitted the castle of Leyva, and the happy consequence that attended the bad success of his amour.

I was mounted on a good horse of my own, with two hundred pistoles in my portmanteau, the best part of which I had

got by the banditti whom we slew, and the share of the three thousand ducats which had been stolen from Samuel Simon; for Don Alphonso, without making me restore what I had fingered, had made restitution of the whole sum out of his own pocket. Wherefore, considering my effects as wealth become lawful, I enjoyed it without scruple. I was in possession of a fund, therefore, which did not allow me to be much concerned for the future, over and above the confidence which one of my age always has in his own merit: besides, Toledo presented an agreeable asylum; for I did not at all doubt that the count de Polan would be pleased with the opportunity of obliging one of his deliverers with a kind reception, and an apartment in his house. But this nobleman I looked upon as my last resource, and resolved, before I should apply to him, to spend part of my money in travelling through the kingdoms of Murcia and Grenada, which I longed particularly to see. With this design I set out for Almansa, whence continuing my journey, I went from city to city, as far as Grenada,* without meeting with any bad accident. Fortune, satisfied with having played me so many tricks, seemed willing at length to leave me in quiet: but for all that, she was then hatching a great many more, as will be seen in the sequel. One of the first persons I met in the streets of Grenada was Signor Don Ferdinand de Leyva, who was, as well as Don Alphonso, son-in-law to the Count de Polan. We were equally surprised at seeing one another in that place. "Gil Blas, (cried he,) how come you to be in this city? What business brings you hither?" "Signor, (said I,) if you are astonished to see me in this country, you will be much more so when you hear the cause of my quitting the service of Signor Don Cesar and his son." Then I recounted all that had passed between Serapha and me, without the least disguise. He laughed heartily at the adventure; then growing serious again, "Friend, (said he,) I offer you my mediation in this affair, and will write to my sister-in-law." "By no means, Signor, (said I, interrupting him,) pray don't write; for I did not leave the castle of Leyva with any intention to return. Make, if you please, another use of the regard you have for me; and if any one of your friends has occasion for a secretary or steward, I beg you will speak to him in my favor. I dare assure you, that you shall have no cause to repent of your recommendation." "With all my heart, (he replied,) I will do what you desire: I am come to Grenada to visit an old aunt who is sick, and I shall stay here three weeks longer; at the end of which, I shall set out in my return to my castle of Lorqui, where I have left Julia. I lodge here, (added he, showing me a house about a hundred yards from us:) come and call for me some hours hence; by which time, perhaps, I shall have discovered some suitable post for you."

And indeed, at our very next meeting, he said, "The Archbishop of Grenada, my kinsman and friend, wants a young man of letters, possessed of a good hand, to make fair copies of his writings; for he is a great author, has composed a vast number of homilies, and studies more every day, which he pronounces with applause. As I believe you are such an one as he wants, I proposed you to him, and he has promised to take you into his service. Go and present yourself to him in my name; and you may judge, by the reception which you shall receive, whether or not I have spoke in your behalf."

This was just such a place as I desired; wherefore, having dressed to the best advantage, in order to appear before that prelate, I repaired one morning to the archbishop's palace. Here, was I to imitate the authors of romance, I should give a pompous description of this episcopal palace of Grenada: I would enlarge upon the structure of the building, extol the richness of the furniture, describe the statues and pictures, and not spare the readers the least title of the stories they represented: but I shall content myself with observing, that it equalled the royal palace in magnificence.

I found in the apartments a crowd of ecclesiastics, and gentlemen of the sword, the greatest part whereof were the officers of his grace: his almoners, his gentlemen, his ushers, and valets de chambre. The latter were, almost all, so superbly dressed, that one would have taken them for noblemen rather than domestics, by their haughty looks and affectation of being men of consequence. While I beheld them, I could not help laughing, and ridiculing them within myself. "Egad, (said I,) these people are very happy in bearing the yoke of servitude without feeling it; for, in short, if they felt it, I imagine that their behavior would be less assuming." Addressing myself to a grave jolly personage, that stood at the door of the archbishop's closet, in order to open and shut it when there was occasion, I asked civilly if I could not speak with his Grace. "Wait (said he drily) till his grace comes out to go to mass, and he will give you a moment's audience in passing. I armed myself with patience, and endeavored to enter into conversation with some of the officers: but they began to examine me from head to foot, without deigning to speak one syllable; and then looked at one another, smiling with disdain at the liberty which I had taken to mingle in their discourse. I was, I own, quite disconcerted at seeing myself treated in this manner by valets; and had scarce recollected myself from the confusion in which I was, when the closet-door opened, and the archbishop appeared."

Immediately a profound silence prevailed among his officers, who, all of a sudden, laid aside their insolent carriage, and assumed a respectful look in presence of their master. This prelate was in his sixty and ninth year, pretty much of the make of my uncle the canon Gil Perez; that is, plump and short: he was very much bandy-legged into the bargain, and so bald, that he had only a small tuft of hair remaining

* Grenada, the capital of the kingdom that bears the same name, is the largest and most pleasant city in Spain, built on the banks of the river Darro; the seat of a famous university and see of an archbishop.

on the back part of his head; for which reason he was obliged to cover his head in a fine woollen cap with long ears. In spite of all that, I observed in him the air of a man of quality; doubtless because I knew him to be one. We common people look upon all your great noblemen with a prepossession that often gives them an air of greatness which nature has refused.

The archbishop immediately advancing towards me, asked what I wanted, with a voice full of sweetness: and I told him, that I was the young man of whom Don Ferdinand de Leyva had spoke to him. He gave me no time to proceed; but cried, "O! you are the person then of whom he spoke so handsomely. I retain you in my service: you are a valuable acquisition. You may stay where you are." So saying, he went out, supported by two ushers, after having heard some clergymen, who had something to communicate. Scarce was he out of the room, when the same officers that disdained my conversation, now courted it. They surrounded me, and with the utmost complaisance expressed their joy at seeing me become a commensal officer of the palace. Having heard what their master said to me, they had a longing desire to know on what footing I was retained: but I was so malicious as to balk their curiosity, in revenge for their contempt.

His Grace returning in a little time, made me follow him into his closet, that he might talk with me in private. I concluded that his design in so doing was to try my understanding; and, accordingly, kept myself on my guard, and was resolved to weigh every word before I should speak it. He first of all examined me on what is called humanity; and I did not answer amiss: he had occasion to see that I was pretty well acquainted with the Greek and Latin authors. He then put me upon logic, where I expected him, and found me quite master of that subject. "Your education (said he to me, with some surprise) has not been neglected: let us now see your hand-writing." I thereupon took out of my pocket a sheet, which had I brought for the purpose: and the prelate seemed very well pleased with my performance. "I am satisfied with your hand, (cried he,) and still more with your understanding. I shall thank my nephew Don Ferdinand for having given me such an able young man, whom I look upon as a real present."

Being interrupted by the arrival of some noblemen of Grenada, who came to dine with the archbishop, I left them together, and withdrew among the officers, who were quite profuse in their complaisance to me. I went to dinner with them at the usual time; and if they observed me at table, I did not fail to examine them also. What sagacity there is in the exteriors of churchmen! To me they appeared all saints; so much was my mind overawed by the place where I was; and I did not so much as suspect that there could be any false money in the case; as if no such thing was ever seen among the princes of the church.

Being seated by an old valet de chambre, whose name was Melchior de la Ronda, he took great care to help me to the choice of bits; and this attention which he expressed for me, inspiring me with a respect for him, he was charmed with my polite behavior. "Signor cavalier, (said he softly to me after dinner,) I want to have some private conversation with you." At the same time he carried me to a part of the palace where nobody could overhear us; and there talked to me in this manner: "Son, from the very first moment in which I saw you, I felt an inclination for you: of this I will give you a certain proof, by imparting something which may be of great advantage to you. You are here in a family, where true and false devotees live pell-mell; so that it will be an infinite time before you can of yourself be acquainted with the ground. But I will spare you such a tedious and disagreeable study, by discovering the characters of both; after which, you may the more easily conduct yourself."

"I will begin (added he) with his Grace, who is a very pious prelate, incessantly employed in edifying and reforming the people, by sermons of his own composition, full of excellent morals. He quitted the court about twenty years ago, in order to devote himself entirely to his zeal for his flock. He is a learned man and a great orator, whose sole pleasure consists in preaching, and his hearers are ravished with admiration. Perhaps there is a little vanity in the case: but besides that it does not belong to man to penetrate the heart, it would be ungrateful in me to inquire into the affairs of a person whose bread I eat. If I was permitted to disapprove of any thing in my master, I would blame his severity. Instead of making an allowance for ecclesiastical follies, he punishes them with too much rigor: in particular, he prosecutes, without mercy, those who, relying on their innocence, attempt to justify themselves in a legal manner, in contempt of his authority. I observe another fault which is common to him with a great many people of quality: although he loves his domestics, he makes no consideration for their services, but lets them grow old without ever thinking of procuring for them some small settlement. If he gives them gratifications sometimes, they owe them solely to the goodness of somebody who has spoken in their behalf: for it would never come into his head to provide for them otherwise."

This is what the old valet de chambre told me of his master; and he afterwards communicated his thoughts of the clergymen with whom we had dined: pictures which but ill agreed with their external deportment. Indeed, he did not represent them as dishonest men, but only as bad priests; excepting some, however, whose virtue he very much extolled. I was no longer at a loss how to regulate my features among those gentlemen: as that very evening, at supper, I, like them, assumed a sage aspect; a task that costs nothing; so that we must not wonder that there are so many hypocrites in the world.

CHAPTER III.

Gil Blas becomes the favorite of the archbishop, and the cavalier of his bounty.

I had been in the afternoon to fetch my baggage and horse from the inn where I had lodged; after which I returned to supper at the palace, where I found a very handsome chamber, and a down bed, prepared for me. His Grace ordered me to be called early next morning; and gave me a homely to transcribe, enjoining me to copy it with all possible exactness. This I performed minutely, without having forgot either accent, point, or comma; so that the joy he expressed was mingled with surprise. "Good heaven!" (cried he in a transport, when he had surveyed all the sheets of my copy,) was ever any thing seen so correct? You transcribe so well, that you must certainly understand grammar. Tell me ingeniously, my friend, have you found nothing that shocked you in writing it over? Some neglect, perhaps, in the style, or improper term?" "O, Sir, (answered I, with an air of modesty,) I am not learned enough to make critical observations; and if I was, I am persuaded that the works of your Grace would escape my censure." The prelate smiled at my reply; and, though he said nothing, discovered through all his piety that he was a downright author.

By this kind of flattery, I entirely gained his good graces, became more and more dear to him every day; and at length understood from Don Ferdinand, who visited him very often, that I was so much beloved, I might look upon my fortune as already made. This my master himself confirmed to me, a little time after, on the following occasion. One evening he repeated in his closet, when I was present, with great enthusiasm, an homily which he intended to pronounce the next day in the cathedral; and, not satisfied with asking my opinion of it in general, obliged me to single out the particular passages which I most admired. I had the good luck to mention those that he himself looked upon to be the best, his own favorite maxims; by which means I passed, in his judgment, for a man who had a delicate knowledge of the true beauties of a work. "This is (cried he) what is called having taste and sentiment; well, friend, I assure thee thou hast not got Bosonian ears." In a word, he was so well satisfied with me, that he pronounced, with some vivacity, "Gil Blas, henceforth give thyself no uneasiness about thy fortune; I undertake to make it extremely agreeable; I love thee; and, as a proof of my affection, make thee my confidant."

I no sooner heard these words than I fell at his Grace's feet, quite penetrated with gratitude; I heartily embraced his bandy-legs, and looked upon myself as a man on the highway to wealth and opulence. "Yes, my child, (resumed the archbishop, whose discourse had been interrupted by my prostration,) thou shalt be the repository of my most secret thoughts. Listen with attention to what I am going to say: my chief pleasure consists in preaching; the Lord gives a blessing to my homilies; they touch the hearts of sinners, make them seriously reflect on their conduct, and have recourse to repentance. I have sometimes the satisfaction to see a miser terrified by the images which I represent to his avarice, open his treasures, and squander them with a prodigal hand. I have also to see, as it were, the Epicurean from his pleasures, filled hermitages with the sons of ambition, and confirmed in her duty the wife who has been shaken by the allurements of a seducing lover. These conversions, which are frequent, ought of themselves to excite my study; nevertheless, I will confess my weakness; I propose to myself another reward, a reward which the delicacy of my virtue reproaches me with in vain! I mean the esteem that the world shows for fine polished writing. The honor of being reckoned a perfect orator, has charmed my imagination; my performances are thought equally strong and delicate; but I would, of all things, avoid the fault of good authors who write too long, and retire without forfeiting the least title of my reputation. Wherefore, my dear Gil Blas, (continued the prelate,) one thing that I exact of thy zeal is, whenever thou shalt perceive my pen smacks of old age, and my genius flag, don't fail to advertise me of it; for I don't trust to my own judgment, which may be seduced by self-love. That observation must proceed from a disinterested understanding, and I make choice of thee, which I know is good; resolved to stand to thy decision." "Thank heaven, Sir, (said I,) that period is far off: besides, a genius like that of your Grace will preserve its vigor much better than any other; or, to speak more justly, will be always the same. I look upon you as another cardinal Ximenes, whose superior genius, instead of being weakened by age, seemed to receive new strength from it." "No flattery, friend, (said he, interrupting me,) I know I am liable to sink all at once: people at my age begin to feel infirmities, and the infirmities of the body often affect the understanding. I repeat it to thee again, Gil Blas, as soon as thou shalt judge mine in the least impaired, be sure to give me notice; and be not afraid of speaking freely and sincerely, for I shall receive thy advice as a mark of thy affection. Besides, thy interest is concerned; if, unapparently for thee, it should come to my ears that the public says my discourses have no longer their wonted force, and that it is high time for me to repose myself; I frankly declare that thou shalt lose my friendship, as well as the fortune I have promised. Such will be the fruit of thy foolish reserve!"

Here my patron left off speaking, in order to hear my reply, which was, a promise to behave according to his desire. From that moment he concealed nothing from me. I became his favorite; an event which none of his domestics, except Melchior de la Ronda, could perceive without envy. It was a surprising scene to behold the manner in which the gentlemen and squires then lived with the confidant of his Grace: they were not ashamed to be guilty of grovelling meanness in order to captivate my good-will. I could scarce believe they were Spaniards; though I did them good offices

without being the dupe of their selfish complaisance. His Grace the archbishop, at my request, exerted himself in their favor: to one he procured a company, and put him in a condition to make a figure in the army. Another he sent to Mexico, to take possession of a considerable post which he had obtained for him; and my friend Melchior, through my means, enjoyed a handsome gratification. This condescension convinced me, that though the prelate did not anticipate people's desires, he rarely refused any favor that was asked.

But what I did for a certain priest deserves, in my opinion, to be told: one day, a licentiate, whose name was Lewis Garcias, a young man of a very good appearance, was presented to me by our steward; who said, "Signor Gil Blas, this honest clergyman is one of my best friends; he is chaplain of a nunnery; and his virtue has not escaped scandal: some people have done him ill offices with his Grace, who has suspended him, and is unhappily so much prejudiced against him, that he will listen to no solicitation in his behalf. We have employed, to no purpose, all the persons of rank in Grenada, to beg that he may be re-established; but our master is quite inflexible."

"Gentlemen (said I), you have gone the wrong way to work; it would have been better for Mr. Licentiate if no solicitation had been made; for in their endeavors to serve him, they have done him a manifest injury. I am well acquainted with his Grace; intreaties and recommendations serve only to aggravate, in his opinion, the fault of an ecclesiastic. It was but 't'other day I heard him say to himself, 'The more people a priest, who has been guilty of irregularity, engages to speak to me in his behalf, the more is the scandal augmented, and the more severity do I exercise.'"

"That is unfortunate (replied the steward), and my friend would be very much embarrassed if he was not blessed with a good hand: happily for him he writes to admiration; and by the help of that talent keeps himself out of difficulties." I was curious to see if this writing, so much extolled, was much better than my own; and the licentiate, who had a specimen in his pocket, showed me a page that I admired very much, for it looked like a writing-master's copy. While I considered this beautiful performance, a thought coming into my head, I desired Garcias to leave the paper, telling him that I might possibly make some use of it that would turn out to his advantage; that I could not explain myself at that time, but would next day tell him more of the matter. The licentiate, to whom, in all probability, the steward had made an eulogium of my genius, withdrew, as much satisfied as if he had been already reinstated in his office. I was truly desirous that he might be so; and that same day labored for him in the following manner: being alone with the archbishop, I showed him the writing of Garcias, with which my patron seemed quite charmed: then laying hold of the opportunity, "Sir, (said I to him,) since you won't cause your homilies to be printed, I wish they were at least written in this hand." "I am satisfied with thine (answered the prelate), but I own I should not be sorry to have a copy of my work in that hand." "Your Grace (I replied) has nothing to do but to speak: the man who paints so well is a licentiate of my acquaintance, who will be ravished to do that service for you; the more, because by these means he may interest your goodness in extricating him from the melancholy situation in which he has the misfortune to be at present."

The prelate did not fail to ask the name of the licentiate: upon which I said, "He is called Lewis Garcias, and is in despair on account of having incurred your displeasure." "That Garcias (said he, interrupting me), was, if I am not mistaken, chaplain to a convent of nuns, and lies under the censure of the church: I remember some informations that I received against him: his morals are but indifferent." "Sir, said I, (interrupting him in my turn,) I will not undertake to justify him, but I know he has enemies; and pretend that the authors of those informations which you have seen were more bent upon doing him ill offices than on telling the truth." "That may be (replied the archbishop); there are abundance of very dangerous dispositions in this world. Besides, granted that his conduct has not been always irreproachable, he may have repented of his misbehavior; and, in short, there is mercy for every transgression. Bring the licentiate hither; I take off his suspension."

Thus it is, that the most severe men abate of their severity when more dear self-interest is concerned. The archbishop granted, without difficulty, to the vain pleasure of having his works well writ, that which he had refused to the most powerful solicitations. I carried the news immediately to the steward, who imparted them to his friend Garcias: who, the very next day, coming to make an acknowledgment of thanks suitable to the favor obtained, I presented him to my master, who contented himself with reprimanding him slightly, and gave him the homilies to transcribe. Garcias acquitted himself so well, that he was re-established in his ministry, and even obtained the living of Gabia, a large market-town in the neighborhood of Grenada.

CHAPTER IV.

The archbishop is seized with a fit of the apoplexy. The dilemma in which Gil Blas found himself, and the method he took to be extricated.

WHILE I thus bestowed my service on different people, Don Ferdinand being about to leave Grenada, I visited that nobleman before his departure, in order to thank him anew for the excellent post which he had procured for me. I appeared to him so well satisfied with my condition, that he said, "My dear Gil Blas, I am ravished to find thee so well pleased with my uncle the archbishop." "I am charmed with him (I replied), and shall never be able to show myself grateful enough for his generosity to me. Nothing less could have consoled me for the loss of Don Cesar and his son." "I

am persuaded (answered he) that they are both extremely mortified at your absence; but perhaps you are not separated for ever: fortune may one day bring you together again." Melted by these words, I sighed, and found at that instant my love for Don Alphonso so great, that I would have willingly abandoned the archbishop, with all the agreeable hopes he had given me, to return to the castle of Leyva, if the obstacle that banished me from it had been removed. Don Ferdinand perceived the emotions of my soul, which pleased him so much that he embraced me with affection, and saved me that his whole family would always bear a part in my destiny.

Two months after this gentleman's departure, in the very zenith of my favor, we had a hot alarm in the episcopal palace: the archbishop was seized with a fit of the apoplexy; he was, however, succored immediately, and such salutary medicines administered, that in a few days his health was re-established: but his understanding had received a rude shock, which I plainly perceived in the very next discourse which he composed. I did not, however, find the difference between this and the rest so sensible as to make me conclude that the orator began to flag; and waited for another homily to fix my resolution. This indeed was quite decisive; sometimes the good old prelate repeated the same thing over and over; sometimes rose too high, or sunk too low: it was a vague discourse, the rhetoric of an old professor, a mere capucine.*

I was not the only person who took notice of this: the greatest part of the audience, when he pronounced it, as if they had been also hired to examine it, said softly to one another, "This sermon smells strong of the apoplexy." Come, master homily-critic (said I then to myself), prepare to do your office: you see that his Grace begins to fail: it is your duty to give him notice of it, not only as the depository of his thoughts, but likewise, lest some one of his friends should be free enough with him to prevent you: in that case you know what would happen; your name would be erased from his last will, in which there is, doubtless, a better legacy provided for you than the library of the licentiate Sedillo.

After these reflections, I made others of a quite contrary nature. To give the notice in question, seemed a delicate point: I imagined that it might be ill received by an author like him, conceited of his own works; but rejecting this suggestion, I represented to myself that he could not possibly take it amiss, after having exacted it of me in so pressing a manner. Add to this, that I depended upon my being able to mention it with address, and make him swallow the pill without reluctance. In a word, finding that I ran a greater risk in keeping silence than in breaking it, I determined to speak.

The only thing that embarrassed me now, was how to break the ice. Luckily the orator himself extricated me from that difficulty, by asking what people said of him, and if they were satisfied with his last discourse. I answered, that his homilies were always admired, but in my opinion the last had not succeeded so well as the rest in affecting the audience. "How, friend! (replied he, with astonishment,) has it met with any Aristarchus?" "No, Sir (said I), by no means: such works as yours are not to be criticised; every body is charmed with them. Nevertheless, since you have laid your injunctions upon me to be free and sincere, I will take the liberty to tell you, that your last discourse, in my judgment, was not altogether the energy of your other performances. Are not you of the same opinion?"

My master grew pale at these words; and said, with a forced smile, "So then, Mr. Gil Blas, this piece is not to your taste?" "I don't say so, Sir, (cried I, quite disconcerted:) I think it excellent, although a little inferior to your other works." "I understand you (he replied): you think I flag, don't you? Come, be plain: you believe it is time for me to think of retiring." "I should not have been so bold (said I) as to speak so freely, if your Grace had not commanded me: I do no more, therefore, than obey you: and I most humbly beg that you will not be offended at my freedom." "God forbid (cried he, with precipitation), God forbid that I should find fault with it. In so doing I should be very unjust. I don't at all take it ill that you speak your sentiment; it is your sentiment only that I find bad. I have been most egregiously deceived in your narrow understanding."

Though I was disconcerted, I endeavored to find some mitigation, in order to set things to rights again: but how is it possible to appease an incensed author, one especially who has been accustomed to hear himself praised? "Say no more, my child, (said he:) you are yet too raw to make proper distinctions. Know, that I never composed a better homily than that which you disapprove: for my genius, thank heaven, hath as yet lost nothing of its vigor. Henceforth I will make a better choice of a confidant, and keep one of greater ability than you. Go (added he, pushing me by the shoulders out of his closet), go tell my treasurer to give you a hundred ducats, and may heaven conduct you with that sum. Adieu, Mr. Gil Blas, I wish you all manner of prosperity, with a little more taste."

CHAPTER V.

The step that Gil Blas took after the archbishop had dismissed him. His accidental meeting with the licentiate who had been so much obliged to him; with the gratitude of that priest.

I WENT out of the closet, cursing the caprice, or rather weakness of the archbishop, and more enraged against him than afflicted at the loss of his favor. I even doubted some time if I should go and touch my hundred ducats; but, after mature deliberation, I was not fool enough to refuse them. I

* Capucine. A sarcasm on the sermons of the Capuchins, which are not remarkable for correctness of composition.

† Aristarchus, a great critic in the time of Ptolemy Philadelphus.

considered that this money would not deprive me of the right of ridiculing the prelate; in which I was resolved not to be wanting, as often as his homilies should be brought upon the carpet, in my presence.

I went, therefore, and demanded the hundred ducats of the treasurer, without mentioning a single word of what had happened between his master and me: and went afterwards in quest of Melchior de la Ronda, to bid him an eternal adieu. He loved me too much to be insensible of my misfortune, which while I recounted, I perceived that grief was painted on his countenance. In spite of all the respect he owed the archbishop, he could not help blaming his behavior. But as I swore in my rage that the prelate should pay for it, and that I would make the whole town merry at his expense, the sage Melchior said to me, "Believe me, my dear Gil Blas, you had better suppress your resentment. People of an inferior rank ought always to respect persons of quality, whatever cause they may have given them to complain. There are, I own, some very mean noblemen, who scarce deserve the least consideration; but as they have the power of doing mischief, they are to be feared."

I thanked the old valet de chambre for his good advice, which I promised to observe. "If you go (said he) to Madrid, you shall visit Joseph Navarro, my nephew, who is clerk of the kitchen to Signior Don Balthazar de Zuniga; and, I dare say, a young man worthy of your friendship, frank, brisk, obliging, and forward to serve his friends: I wish that he and you may become acquainted." I answered, that I would not fail to wait on this Joseph Navarro, on my first arrival at Madrid, whither I was determined to go. I then quitted the archbishop's palace, with an intent never to set foot in it again. If I had still been in possession of my horse, I should have, perhaps, set out immediately for Toledo; but I had sold him while I was in favor, believing that I should have no further occasion for his service. I hired a furnished room, resolving to stay a month at Grenada, and then repair to the Count de Poina.

As dinner-time approached, I asked of my landlady if there was not an eating-house in the neighborhood; and she answering, that there was an excellent one a few steps from her house, where there was very good accommodation, and a great deal of good company; I made her show me the place, and going thither a little after, was directed into a large hall, which bore some resemblance to a refectory. Ten or twelve people sat at a large table, covered with a dirty cloth, conversing with one another, while every one ate his own little portion. My mess was likewise brought, which, at another time, would doubtless have made me regret the table I had lost; but I was then so much piqued against the archbishop, that the scanty allowance of my eating-house seemed preferable to the good cheer I had enjoyed in his palace. I condemned a variety of dishes, and arguing like the doctor of Valladolid, Unhappy are those (said I to myself) who frequent such pernicious tables, where one must continually be on his guard against sensuality, for fear of overloading his stomach. Can one eat too little? In my ill humor, I praised those very aphorisms I had hitherto very much neglected.

While I dispatched my commons, without fear of exceeding the bounds of temperance, the licentiate Lewis Garcia, now become vicar of Gambia in the manner already related, came into the hall. He no sooner perceived me than he came running to salute me with the utmost eagerness, or rather with all the expressions of excessive joy. He hugged me close, and I was obliged to undergo a very long compliment on the service I had done him. He fatigued me with his demonstrations of gratitude. "Forso god, my dear patron, since I have had the good fortune to meet you here, we shan't part without a glass; but as there is no good wine in this eating-house, I will carry you, if you please, after our scanty repast, to a place where I will treat you with a bottle of fine dry Lucena, and a glass of fine Muscadine of Foncearrel. We must certainly commit that debauch. I wish I had the happiness of enjoying you a few days only at my personage at Gambia. There you should be received like a generous Mezenas, to whom I owe the quiet and easy life I lead."

While he talked to me in this manner, his allowance was served, and he went to work, without ceasing, however, to entertain me, at intervals, with something which he thought would flatter my vanity. I laid hold of this opportunity to speak in my turn; and as he did not forget to inquire about his friend the steward, I made no mystery of my leaving the archbishop's service. I even related to him the most minute circumstance of my disgrace, to which he listened with great attention. After what he had said to me, who would not have expected to hear him, penetrated with the most grateful sorrow, exclaim against the archbishop? But this was the farthest thing from his thoughts. He grew indifferent and pensive, finished his dinner without speaking a word, then rising suddenly from table, bid me good bye in a cool manner, and disappeared. The ungrateful wretch seeing me no longer in a condition to serve him, spared himself even the trouble of concealing his sentiments. I laughed at his ingratitude, and looked on him with all the contempt he deserved; called to him aloud, that I might be heard. "Holloa! you sage chaplain of nuns, go and give orders to cook that delicious wine of Lucena, with which you have promised to regale me."

CHAPTER VI.

Gil Blas goes to see a play at Grenada. His astonishment at the sight of one of the actresses; and the consequences of it.

GARCIA was no sooner out of the hall, than two well-dressed cavaliers came in and sat down by me; they began to talk of the players of the Grenada company, and of a new comedy which was then on the stage. This piece, according to their discourse, made a great noise in the city; and I re-

solved to go and see it that very day; for I had not been at a play since my arrival at Grenada. As I had almost all the time lived in the archbishop's palace, where that diversion was unathematic, I had taken care not to indulge that pleasure, but amused myself entirely with my master's homilies.

I repaired, therefore, at the proper time, to the play-house, where I found a numerous assembly; overheard all around me dissertations on the piece before it began, and observed that every body undertook to criticise it. One person declared himself for, another against, the performance. "Was there ever a work better composed?" said one on my right. "What a pitiful style!" cried one on my left. Truly, if there are a good many bad authors, it must be allowed there are still a greater number of wretched critics: and when I consider the mortifications that dramatic poets must undergo, I am astonished that there are any so bold as to brave the ignorance of the multitude, and the dangerous censure of wittings who sometimes corrupt the judgment of the public.

At length the Gracioso* presented himself to open the scene. He was saluted, on his first appearance, with a general clap; by which I perceived that he was one of those spoiled actors, in whom the pit pardons every thing. And, indeed, this player did not speak one word, nor perform one gesture, without attracting applause. The audience made him too sensible of the pleasure they had in seeing him on the stage; and he abused their favor accordingly. I perceived that he sometimes forgot himself in the middle of a scene, and put their prepossession in his behalf to too severe a proof: for they would often have done him justice, had they hissed instead of extolling him to the skies.

There was likewise a clapping of hands at the appearance of some other actors, and in particular of an actress, who performed the part of a waiting-woman; whom, having considered with attention, no terms can express my surprise when I recollected in her the person of Laura, my dear Laura! whom I still believed to be in the service of Arsenia at Madrid. I could not doubt that it was she; her shape, her features, the sound of her voice, every thing assured me that I was not mistaken. Nevertheless, as I had mistrusted the evidence of my eyes and ears, I asked her name of a cavalier who sat by me. "Hey! (said he,) from whence come you? It seems you are just arrived, since you don't know the fair Estella."

The resemblance was too perfect for me to be deceived by this disguise; I could easily conceive that Laura, when she changed her condition, had also altered her name; and curious to know her situation, for the public is generally pretty well acquainted with the affairs of persons in her sphere, I begged to know of the same man, if this Estella had not some gallant of importance. He answered, that a Portuguese nobleman, called the Marquis de Marialva, who had been about two months at Grenada, was at a considerable expense on her account. He might have told me a great deal more if I had not been afraid of fatiguing him with questions. I was more engrossed by the news which this cavalier had told me, than by the representation of the play; and if any body had asked me the subject of the piece, when I came out, he would have embarrassed me not a little; I did nothing but muse upon Laura, or Estella, and firmly resolved to go and visit her next day; though I was not without anxiety about the reception I should meet with. I had reason to believe, that the sight of me would not yield her much pleasure in this brilliant situation of her affairs; nay, I imagined that such a good actress, in order to revenge herself upon one with whom she had certainly cause to be dissatisfied, would probably disclaim his acquaintance. All this did not dissuade me from my design of going. After a slight repast (for such only my eating-house afforded), I went home to my lodging, where I waited impatiently for the next day.

I slept little that night, and got up before the sun; but as I concluded that a nobleman's mistress would not be visible so early, I spent three or four hours in dressing, shaving, powdering, and perfuming; resolving to present myself before her in such a condition as would give her no cause to blush at seeing me again. I sallied out about ten o'clock, and repaired to her lodging, to which I received a direction, at the house where the players lived. She possessed the chief apartment of a large house; the door of which being opened to me by a chambermaid, I told her that I wanted to speak with dame Estella. The maid went to signify my desire, and I immediately heard her mistress pronounce, with a loud voice, "Who is the young man? what does he want? Let him come in." By this I concluded that I had chosen an unreasonable time for my visit, that her Portuguese lover was at her toilet, and that her reason for speaking so loud, was to persuade him that she never received suspected messages. My conjecture was true; the Marquis de Marialva commonly passed the morning in her company; and I expected a very disagreeable compliment, when this truly original actress, seeing me appear, ran to me with open arms, crying, "Ah! my dear brother! is it you?" And with these words, embraced me several times. Then turning to her gallant, "My lord (said she), pardon me for yielding to the force of blood in your presence. After an absence of three years, I cannot behold a brother, whom I tenderly love, without giving him some marks of my affection. Well, my dear Gil Blas (continued she, addressing me anew), tell me some news of my family: in what condition did you leave it?"

This question embarrassed me at first; but I soon discovered Laura's intention, and seconding her artifice, answered with an air suited to the scene we had to act, "Thank heaven, sister, our parents are in good health." "I don't doubt (she replied) that you are astonished to find me an actress at Grenada; but do not condemn me unheard. Three years

ago, as you remember, my father thought he had settled me to advantage, by giving me in marriage to captain Don Antonio Celio, who carried me from the Asturias to Madrid, where he was born. Six months after our arrival in that city, having had an affair of honor brought upon him by his own violent humor, he killed a cavalier, who had taken it in his head to favor me with some attention. This gentleman being related to persons of great quality and credit, my husband, who had no interest, fled into Catalonia, with all the money and jewels he could find in the house; embarked at Barcelona, crossed into Italy, engaged in the service of the Venetians, and at last lost his life in the Morea, fighting against the Turks. In the mean time, our landed estate was confiscated, and I had but a small jointure left. What could I do in such a troublesome extremity? I could not return into the Asturias: for what purpose go thither? all the consolation I should have received from my family, would have been no more than sympathy and condolence. On the other hand, I had been too well educated to be capable of embracing a life of libertinism. Upon what determination then could I fix? I have turned actress to preserve my character."

The Marquis de Marialva, who lost not a word of the whole discourse, implicitly believed every syllable of what Don Antonio's widow was pleased to utter. He even joined in the conversation, and asked if I was in any business at Grenada or elsewhere. I was in some doubt, at that instant, whether or no I should tell a lie; but thinking that unnecessary, I spoke truth, recounting every circumstance of my entering into, and quitting the archbishop's service; which afforded infinite diversion to the Portuguese nobleman. It is true, that, notwithstanding my promise to Melchior, I made myself a little merry at the expense of his Grace. But the most diverting part of the scene was, that Laura, who thought I invented a story in imitation of her, burst into loud fits of laughter, which she would have probably spared, had she known that I did not dissemble.

Having ended my narration, which I finished with the lodging I had hired, word was brought that dinner was on the table. Upon which I would have retired, in order to go and dine at my eating-house; but Laura, stopping me, said, "What do you mean, brother? you shall dine with me, and I won't even suffer you to live any longer in a hired room; for I intend you shall both eat and lodge in my house. Order your baggage to be brought hither this evening; I have a bed to spare."

The Portuguese nobleman, who, perhaps, was not very well pleased with this hospitality, addressing himself to Laura, said, "No, Estella, you have not convenience for him in these lodgings. Your brother seems to be a pretty young fellow; and the advantage he has in being so dear to you, interests me in his favor. I will take him into my service: he shall be my favorite secretary and chief confidant. Let him not fail to come and sleep at my house this very night; for I will order an apartment to be prepared for the purpose. I will allow him a salary of four hundred ducats; and if, in the sequel, I have cause, as I hope I shall, to be satisfied with his behavior, I will put him in a condition to console himself for being too sincere with the archbishop."

The acknowledgments which I made to the Marquis at this juncture were followed by those of Laura, who improved upon mine. So saying, he saluted his theatrical princess, and went away. She led me immediately into a closet, where seeing herself alone with me, "I should burst (cried she) if I was obliged to resist any longer the inclination I have to laugh." Then throwing herself into an easy chair, and holding her sides, she laughed immoderately, as if she had lost her senses. I found it impossible not to follow her example, and when we had indulged ourselves sufficiently, "Confess, Gil Blas (said she), that we have acted a pleasant farce: but I did not expect such a catastrophe; my design being no other than to provide for you a table and lodging in my house; which, that I might offer with decency, I made thee pass for my brother. I am ravished that such a good post has occurred to thee by accident. The Marquis de Marialva is a generous nobleman, who will even exceed his promise in thy favor. Another (added she) might not, perhaps, have given such a precious reception to one who quits his friends without bidding them farewell; but I am one of those good creatures, who cannot help seeing again, with pleasure, a rogue whom they have once loved." I candidly acknowledged my impolite behavior, for which I asked pardon. She then conducted me into a very handsome dining-room, where we set down at table, and, as a waiting-woman and lacquey were present, behaved to one another like brother and sister.

Having dined, we went back to the same closet where we had conversed together before. There my incomparable Laura, giving a loose to all her natural gaiety, demanded an account of all my adventures since our separation. I made a faithful recital of the whole: and when I had gratified her curiosity, she gave me the same satisfaction in recounting the following history of herself.

CHAPTER VII.

The history of Laura.

I AM going to relate, as succinctly as I can, by what accident I embraced the profession of a player.

Great event happened after you left me in such an honorable manner. My mistress, Arsenia, rather tired than disgusted with the world, renounced the stage, and carried me with her to a fine estate which she had bought near Zamora with the price of her favors. In this city we soon contracted an acquaintance, and going thither, frequently, to pass a day or two, came back again, and shut ourselves up in our castle.

In one of these small journeys, Don Felix Maldonado, the corregidor's only son, saw me by accident, and happening to be pleased with my appearance, sought an opportunity of

* A favorite actor.

speaking with me in private, which, that I may conceal nothing from thee, I own was facilitated by myself. He was a cavalier, not yet twenty years old, fair as love himself, a mere pattern in shape, and still more engaging, by his gallant and generous behavior, than by his person: for he made me an offer of a large brilliant, which he had on his finger, with such a good grace, and pressing entreaties, that I could not for my soul refuse it. I did not possess such an amiable gallant with indifference. But what madness is it in Abigail to attach themselves to the young heirs of persons in authority. His father, the most severe of all corregidores, informed of my intelligence, made haste to prevent the consequences of it, and ordered me to be apprehended by a troop of alguazils, who carried me, regardless of my cries, to the hospital of compassion.* There, without any other form or process, the superior ordered me to be stripped of my ring and dress, and clothed with a long gown of gray serge, girded about me with a strap of black leather, from whence a rosary of large beads hung down to my heels. This being performed, I was conducted into a hall, where I found an old monk of an order that I did not know, who fell a preaching penitence to me, much in the same manner as dame Leonarda exhorted thee to patience in the cavern. He told me that I was very much obliged to those who caused me to be shut up in that place, for they had done infinite service in rescuing me from the snares of the devil. I will frankly own my ingratitude: far from thinking myself beholden to those who had done me the good office, I loaded them with imprecations.

Eight days I passed in afflicting myself; but on the ninth, (for I counted the very minutes,) my fate seemed to bear another aspect: crossing a small court, I met the steward of our house, a person who ruled with unlimited sway; the superior himself was under his command; and he rendered an account of his stewardship to none but the corregidor, on whom alone he depended, and whose entire confidence he enjoyed. His name was Pedro Zendono; he was born in the town of Solledon, in Biscay, being a tall, pale, meagre man, whose figure would have served as an excellent pattern for the picture of a rank rogue. He scarce seemed to look at the sisters; and, in short, thou never sawest such a hypocritical face, although thou hast lived in an archbishop's palace.

Well then, (said she,) I met this Signor Zendono, who stooped me, saying, "Daughter, be comforted; I am touched with your misfortune." He said no more, but went about his business, leaving me to make what commentaries I pleased on such a laconic text. As I believed him to be a good man, I innocently concluded that he had taken the trouble of examining into the cause of my confinement, and finding me not guilty enough to deserve such unworthy treatment, was resolved to do me a good office with the corregidor. I was little acquainted with the Biscayan, who had quite other intentions. He then resolved in his mind the scheme of a journey, which he imparted to me a few days after. "My dear Laura, (said he,) I am so much affected with your sufferings, that I am resolved to put an end to them immediately. In so doing, I know I shall embrace my own ruin: but I am no longer master of myself. I intend to take you out of prison to-morrow, and conduct you in person to Madrid: being resolved to sacrifice every thing to the pleasure of being your deliverer."

I was ready to swoon with joy at these words of Zendono, who, judging by my acknowledgments that I longed for nothing so much as liberty, had the impudence to carry me off next day, in sight of every body, by the following stratagem. He told the superior that he had orders to bring me to the corregidor, who was at a pleasure-house two leagues from town: and with the utmost assurance made me get into the post-chaise with him, drawn by two good mules, which he had bought for that purpose; and attended by no other servant than a valet, who conducted the chaise, and was entirely devoted to the steward, we set out, not for Madrid, as I imagined, but towards the frontiers of Portugal, where we arrived before the corregidor of Zamora could get notice of our flight, and send the beagles of justice in pursuit of us.

Before we entered Braganza, the Biscayan made me put on a suit of men's clothes, which he had the precaution to provide; and now looking upon me as fairly embarked with him, said to me at the inn where we lodged, "Fair Laura, be not offended with me for bringing you into Portugal; for the corregidor of Zamora will make search for us in our native country, as two criminals to whom Spain ought not to afford a retreat. But (added he) we can shelter ourselves from his resentment in this foreign kingdom, although it be at present under the dominion of the Spanish monarchy. Here we shall, at least, be more secure than in our own country. Follow, therefore, a man who adores you; and let us settle at Coimbra, where I will become a spy for the holy office, and, under the shade of that formidable tribunal, our days will smoothly glide in ease and pleasure."

Such a forward proposal gave me to understand that I had to do with a cavalier, who not did choose to redress the grievances of damsels merely for the glory of knight-errantry. I perceived that he depended a good deal upon my gratitude, and still more upon my distress. Nevertheless, though these two considerations spoke to me in his behalf, I rejected his proposal with disdain. It is true, indeed, I had two strong reasons for showing myself so reserved: I disliked his person, and distrusted his circumstances. But, when returning to the charge, he offered to wed me, as a preliminary, and showed me that his stewardship had put him in a condition to enjoy himself for a long time, I won't deny that I began to listen to his addresses. I was dazzled by the gold and jewels which he spread before me, and found by experience that as many metamorphoses are made by interest as

by love. My Biscayan became, gradually, quite another man in my eyes; his tall, withered carcass assumed the form of a fine shape; his pale complexion seemed agreeably fair; and I gave a favorable appellation to his hypocritical look. I then accepted his hand, without reluctance, in the face of heaven, which he called to witness our engagement. After this, he suffered no contradiction on my part; we set out again on our travels, and in a short time Coimbra beheld a new family within its walls.

My husband purchased for me some handsome clothes adapted to my own sex, and presented me with several diamonds, among which I recollected that of Don Felix Maldonado. This discovery was sufficient to make me conceive how all the jewels I had seen were acquired, and to persuade me that I had not married a scrupulous observer of the seventh article of the decalogue. But, considering myself as the first cause of his dexterity, I forgave him in my heart: for a woman will excuse even the bad actions which her beauty prompts the men to commit; otherwise I should have thought him an execrable villain.

I was pretty well satisfied with him for two or three months, during which he behaved in a gallant manner, and seemed to love me with great tenderness; nevertheless, these marks of affection were false appearances, for the rogue cheated me at last. One morning, on my return from mass, I found nothing at home but bare walls: the whole furniture, with all my baggage, was carried off: Zendono, and his faithful valet, had taken their measures so well, that in less than an hour the general pillage of the house had begun and finished, in such a manner, that with the clothes only which I had on my back, and the ring of Don Felix, which was luckily on my finger, I saw myself abandoned by an ungrateful wretch, like another Ariadne. But, I assure thee, I did not amuse myself with making elegies on my misfortunes; I rather thanked heaven for having delivered me from such a wretch, who could not fail, soon or late, to fall into the hands of justice; and looked upon the days we had spent together as so much lost time, for which I would soon make myself amends. Had I been desirous of staying in Portugal, and attaching myself to some lady of fashion, I should not have wanted a place; but, whether I loved my own country, or was influenced by the force of destiny, which prepared a better fortune for me here, I resolved to return to Spain; and applying to a jeweller, who gave me ready money for my ring, set out with an old Spanish lady who was going in a chaise to Seville.

This person, whose name was Dorothea, had been to visit one of her relations settled at Coimbra, and was on her return to Seville, where she lived. There was such a sympathy between her disposition and mine, that we became friends the very first day of our journey; and our mutual affection grew so strong on the road, that, on our arrival, she would suffer me to lodge no where but in her house. I had no cause to repent of my acquaintance, for I never knew a woman of a better character; and one might still perceive, by her features, and the sparkling of her eyes, that in her youth many a guitar had been thrummed on her account; indeed, she was the widow of several noble husbands, and lived in an honorable manner on the jointures which she enjoyed.

Among other excellent qualities, she had that of being very compassionate to unfortunate young women. When I imparted to her my own story, she entered warmly into my interests, and bestowed a thousand curses on Zendono. "What dogs these men are! (said she, in a tone that made me guess she had met some steward in her way,) perfidious wretches! I know there are such villains in the world, who divert themselves in deceiving women. What I am pleased at, my dear child (added she,) is, that according to your relation you are no longer bound to that perjured Biscayan: if your marriage with him was good enough to secure your reputation, by way of recompense, it is also bad enough to permit you to contract a better, whenever you can find an opportunity."

I went abroad every day with Dorothea, either to church or to visit; and this being the way to meet with some adventure soon, I attracted the notice of several cavaliers, who, in order to sound the business, made interest with my old landlady: but some had not wherewithal to make a good settlement, and others were still minors: so that I had not the least desire of listening to any of them. One day, Dorothea and I took a whim of going to see a play at Seville; and upon consulting the bill, we found that the players intended to act, *La famosa Comedia, el Embaxador de Simo*, composed by *Le Vega Carpio*.

Among the actresses who appeared on the stage, I discovered my old friend Phenicia, that jolly merry wench whom thou hast seen, when she was waiting-maid to Florimonda, and with whom thou hast sometimes supped at Arsenia's house. I knew that she had not been in Madrid for two years before, but was ignorant of her being an actress. Having an eager desire of embracing her, I found the piece very tedious: but this might be the fault of the actors, who played either too ill or too well to yield me amusement; for as to me, who am a merry creature, I own myself as much

diverted by a player who is perfectly ridiculous, as by one who is excellent in his way.

At length, the moment I waited for being arrived, that is, the end of *La famosa Comedia*, my widow and I went behind the scenes, where we perceived Phenicia acting the coquette, and listening with affection to the soft warbling of a young bird, which, it seems, had allowed itself to be enamored by her declamation. She no sooner observed me, than quitting her admirer with a courteous air, she came towards me with open arms, and loaded me with caresses. We expressed our mutual joy in seeing one another again; but the time and place not permitting us to launch out in a long conversation, we deferred it till next day, when we might discourse together more fully at her lodgings.

The itch of talking is one of the most eager passions of women: I could not close an eye the whole night, so much did I long to engage Phenicia, and worry her with questions upon questions. God knows, I was not lazy in getting up to repair to her lodging, according to the direction she had given me. She lived with the whole company in a large hired house; which when I entered, I met a maid-servant, who, when I desired her to conduct me to Phenicia's apartment, showed me up to a gallery, on one side of which were ten or twelve small chambers, divided from one another by partitions of deal boards only, and possessed by the joyous land. My guide knocked at a door, which Phenicia, whose tongue itched as well as mine, came and opened. Scarce did we allow ourselves time to sit, before we began to chatter. We had a severe brush, and uttered in our turns so many interrogations, that the questions and replies succeeded one another with surprising volubility.

After having recounted our mutual adventures, and reciprocally informed ourselves of the state of our affairs, Phenicia asked what I intended to do: I answered, that I was resolved (until something better should cast up) to enter into the service of some young lady of quality. "O fy! (cried my friend,) you joke sure. Is it possible, my dear, that thou art not yet disgusted with servitude? Art thou not tired with seeing thyself subjected to another's will, with humoring the caprices of a mistress, with hearing thyself reproached, and, in one word, with being a slave? Why wilt thou not, by my example, embrace a theatrical life? Nothing can be more convenient for people of spirit, who have neither birth nor fortune: it is a situation that holds the middle place between the nobility and citizens; an unrestricted condition, free of that decorum which is so troublesome to society. Our revenues are paid in ready cash by the public, which is our bank; we live in continual mirth, and spend our money as we get it."

"The stage (added she) is particularly favorable to women: while I lived with Florimonda (I blush at the remembrance of it), I was reduced to the necessity of listening to the candle-snuffers of the prince's company, not one man of fashion paid the least attention to my figure. What was the cause of this unimportance? I was not seen: the first picture has not its effect, except in a particular light; but since I have been placed on my proper pedestal, that is, on the stage, heavens, what a change has happened! I see at my heels the gayest youth of all the towns through which we pass. An actress, therefore, enjoys a great deal of pleasure in her occupation; if she is prudent, I mean, if she favors one gallant only at a time, she has all the honor imaginable paid to her; her chastity is applauded, and when she changes her lover, she is looked upon as a real widow who marries a second husband: nay, if a widow takes a third, she is spoken of with contempt, and said to have infringed the delicacy of her sex; whereas the actress seems to be more and more regarded, in proportion to the increase of her admirers. After she has gone through a hundred intrigues, she is still a morsel for a lord."

"To whom do you talk in this manner (said I, interrupting her): do you think I am ignorant of these advantages? I have often reflected on them, and they but too much flatter the imagination of such a girl as me: I even feel an inclination for the stage; but that alone is not sufficient; talent is absolutely necessary, and I have none: for when I sometimes attempted to repeat passages of plays before Arsenia, she always found fault with my performance; so that I was disgusted at the profession." "Thou art easily discouraged (replied Phenicia); dost thou not know that these great successes are commonly jealous? They are afraid (in spite of all their vanity) of being eclipsed. In short, I won't take Arsenia's word for thy incapacity; for she was certainly insincere: nay, I assure thee, without flattery, that thou art born for the stage; thou hast genius, a free and graceful carriage, a sweet voice, a good chest, and withal a face! Ah, baggage, how many cavaliers wilt thou charm, if thou turnest actress!"

She plied me with more such seducing discourse, and made me pronounce some verses, that I myself might judge of my capacity for acting; but when she heard me, it was quite another case; she overwhelmed me with applause, and preferred me to all the actresses in Madrid. After this, I should have been inexcusable had I doubted my own merit. Arsenia stood impeached, and convicted of envy and insincerity; and I could not help allowing that I was an admirable subject. Two actors, who happened to come in at that instant, and before whom Phenicia obliged me to repeat the verses which I had already recited to her, were seized with a kind of ecstasy; from which they no sooner recollected themselves, than they loaded me with praise. In good earnest, had the three wagged with one another, which of them should applaud me most, they could not have employed more hyperbolic expressions. My modesty was not proof against such eulogiums: I began to believe myself of some value: and thus my thoughts were turned towards the stage.

"Come on then, my dear (said I to Phenicia), the affair

* Seville, situated on the Guadalquivir, is the capital of Andalusia, and, next to Madrid, the richest city in Spain. It is the seat of a university, archbishop, inquisition, and mint. So ancient, that over one of the gates is the following inscription:

"Condilic Aedae, renovavit Julius urbem,
Residit Christo Ferdinandus telus hanc."

And so remarkable for curiosities, as to be the subject of this distich:

Qui non haviſto Sevilla,
Non haviſto maravilla.

The translation of which the reader will find on another occasion in this work.

* In other words, the house of correction.

is determined: I will follow thy advice, and enter into the company, provided they think well of it." My friend, transported with joy at these words, hugged me in her arms; and her two comrades seemed no less delighted to find me in these sentiments. We agreed, that next day I should repair to the theatre in the morning, and before the whole company assembled, show the same sample of my talent that I had exhibited to them. If I had acquired the good opinion of those who were at Phenicia's lodgings, all the actors judged of me still more favorably, when I had pronounced about twenty verses in their presence. They received me very willingly into their company; and then I was wholly engrossed by my first appearance, which, that I might render as gay as possible, I employed upon it all the money that remained from the sale of my ring; and though I had not enough to make a superb figure, I at least found means to supply the want of magnificence, by a genteel taste in my dress.

At length I appeared on the stage for the first time; and then, what thundering applause, what eulogium, was I favored with! It is downright modesty, my friend, to say simply that I ravished the audience; one must have been witness of the noise I made at Seville, to believe it. I became the discourse of the whole city, which, during three weeks, came in crowds to the play-house in such a manner, that the company, by this novelty, recalled the public, which had begun to desert them. I began then in a manner that charmed everybody; and this was the same thing as if I had advertised myself to be let to the highest bidder. Twenty cavaliers, of all ages, outvied one another in their proffers to me; and if I had followed my own inclination, I would have chosen him who was young and handsome; but people of our stamp ought to consult nothing but their interest and ambition when a settlement is depending. For this reason, Don Ambrosio de Nisana, a man already old and ugly, but rich, generous, and one of the most powerful noblemen of Andalusia, had the preference. True, indeed, I made him purchase my favors at a good price; he hired for me a grand house, which he furnished in a very magnificent manner, gave me an expert cook, two lacques, a chambermaid, and a thousand ducats for my monthly expense, over and above rich clothes and a pretty large quantity of jewels.

What a change was this in my fortune! My reason could not support it: I appeared to myself all of a sudden quite another person; and I am not surprised that there are girls who forget in a little time the meanness and misery from which they are rescued by the caprice of a man of quality. I will make a sincere confession; the applause of the public, the flattering discourse that I heard from all quarters, and the passion of Don Ambrosio, inspired me with sentiments of vanity that amounted to mere extravagance. I considered my talent as a noble title; I assumed the airs of a woman of quality; and becoming as covetous as I had before been prodigal of my smiles, resolved to limit my prospect to dukes, counts, and marquises only.

Signor de Nisana came to sup at my house every evening with some of his friends; and I, on my side, took care to invite the most engaging of our actresses, so that we commonly spent the best part of the night in drinking and making merry. I accommodated myself mightily well to such an agreeable life, which, however, lasted but six months. Noblemen are apt to change, otherwise they would be too amiable. Don Ambrosio forsook me, for a conquest he had made of a young creature from Grenada, who had arrived at Seville with some charms, and the talent of disposing them to the best advantage. My affliction at his inconstancy did not last, however, longer than four and twenty hours. I chose in his room a cavalier of two and twenty, called Don Lewis d'Alcacer, to whom, in point of person, few Spaniards could be compared. Thou wilt, doubtless, ask, and thou hast reason so to do, why I took such a young nobleman for my gallant, when I knew the consequences of such a choice. But, besides that Don Lewis had neither father nor mother, and already enjoyed his estate, I must tell thee that these consequences are not to be dreaded but by girls of a servile condition, or unhappy adventurers. Women of our profession are privileged persons, and not at all answerable for the effects that our charms produce. So much the worse for those families whose heirs we pillage.

Alcacer and I attached ourselves so strongly to one another, that no mutual passion, I believe, ever equalled that which we were inflamed. We loved with so much fury, that one would have thought we were both enchanted; and those who were acquainted with our correspondence believed us the most happy lovers in the world; though we were, in reality, the most miserable. If Don Lewis had a person altogether amiable, he was at the same time so jealous, that he afflicted me incessantly with unjust suspicions. It was in vain for me to accommodate myself to this weakness, to constrain myself so far as not to look upon a man. His distrust, ingenious in finding out crimes to lay to my charge, rendered my caution altogether useless. Our most tender moments were always disturbed by quarrels, which it was impossible to endure. Both of us lost our patience, and we broke in a friendly manner. Wouldst thou believe it? we looked upon the last day as the most charming of our commerce. Equally fatigued with the troubles we had undergone, we expressed the utmost joy in our mutual adieu. We were like two miserable captives, who, after a rude slavery, at last recover their freedom.

Since that adventure, I am always on my guard against love. I will no more contract attachments that may disturb my repose: it does not become those of our profession to sigh like other people; and we ought not to entertain in private a passion, the ridicule of which we represent in public.

About this time I afforded some employment to fame, which reported every where that I was an imitable actress. On the assurance of this goddess, the players of Grenada

wrote to me, proposing that I should enter into their company; and, to let me know that the proposal was not to be rejected, sent me an account of their daily expense, and the terms of their offer: from which I concluded that it would be for my interest to comply. I accepted it, therefore; though, at bottom, I was grieved at parting from Phenicia and Dorothea, whom I loved as much as one woman is capable of loving others of her sex. I left the first busy in melting the plate of a little merchant goldsmith, who, out of vanity, would have an actress for his mistress. I forgot to tell thee, that when I devoted myself to the stage, I changed, through whim, my name from Laura into that of Estella, under which appellation I set out for Grenada.

Here my first appearance was no less lucky than at Seville, and I saw myself at once surrounded by admirers; but being resolved to favor none except in an honorable way, I behaved to them with so much reserve, that they were blinded by my affected modesty. Nevertheless, that I would not be the dupe of a conduct that might be of no service, and which indeed was not natural to me, I was going to listen to a young judge of the citizen race, who assumes the noblesman by virtue of his office, a sumptuous table, and rich equipage, when I saw, for the first time, the Marquis de Marialva. This Portuguese lord, who travels through Spain out of curiosity, stopped, on his way, at Grenada; and coming to the play one night, when I did not act, considered with great attention the actresses who presented themselves, and found one to his liking. He made an acquaintance with her the very next day, and was ready to conclude the bargain, when I appeared on the stage. My figure, and the airs I gave myself, turned the weathercock all of a sudden; and my Portuguese attached himself to me only. To confess the truth, as I was not ignorant that my comrade had pleased that nobleman, I spared nothing to deprive her of her conquest; and I had the good fortune to accomplish it. I know that she bears me a grudge for my success, but I could not help doing it; and she ought to consider it is a thing so natural to women, that the best friends make no scruple of practising it on one another.

CHAPTER VIII.

The reception which Gil Blas met with from the players of Grenada, and his finding an old acquaintance behind the scenes.

LAURA had no sooner finished her story, than an old actress, who lived in the neighborhood, came to take her up in her way to the play-house. This venerable stage heroine would have been very proper for playing the part of the goddess Cotsy. My sister did not fail to present her brother to this superannuated figure; upon which a great many compliments passed on both sides.

I left them together, telling the steward's widow that I would rejoin her at the theatre as soon as I ordered my baggage to be carried to the Marquis de Marialva's house, to which she gave me a direction. I went immediately to my own room; from whence, after having satisfied my landlady, I repaired with a man who carried my portmanteau to a large furnished house, where my new master lodged. I met at the door his steward, who asked me if I was not dame Estella's brother; and upon my answering in the affirmative, said, "Signor Cavalier, you are very welcome: the Marquis of Marialva, whose steward I have the honor to be, has ordered me to give you a handsome reception. There is a chamber prepared for you; to which, if you please, I shall show you the way." So saying, he carried me to the top of the house, and showed me into a chamber so small, that a very narrow bed, a chest, and two chairs, quite filled it. This was my apartment. "You won't be very much at large in this place (said my guide); but to make you amends, you shall be lodged in a superb manner at Lisbon." I locked my portmanteau in my chest, put the key in my pocket, and asked at what hour they supped. It was answered, that the Portuguese nobleman kept no table at home, but gave a certain monthly sum to each domestic for his board. I put other questions to him, and learned that the people belonging to the Marquis were a parcel of happy sluggards. After a short conversation, I left the steward to go in quest of Laura, agreeably engrossed with the presage I had conceived of my new place.

As soon as I arrived at the play-house door, and told that I was Estella's brother, I was immediately admitted. You might have seen the guards as eager in making a passage for me, as if I had been one of the most considerable noblemen of Grenada. All the servants and door-keepers whom I met made me profound bows. But what I wish I could paint to the reader, was my seriocomical reception behind the scenes, where I found the company all dressed, and ready to begin. The actors and actresses, to whom Laura presented me, poured upon me in shoals. The men overwhelmed me with embraces; and the women, in their turns, applying their painted faces to mine, covered it with white and red. Each desirous of being the first to make their compliment, they spoke altogether: it was impossible for me alone to answer; but my sister came to my assistance, and her indefatigable tongue did not leave me in debt to any one.

The embraces of the actors and actresses did not suffice; for I was also obliged to undergo the civilities of the scene-painter, the music, prompter, candle-snuffer, and his deputy; in short, of all the servants of the theatre, who, on the report of my arrival, came running to behold me. One would have thought that all these people were foundlings, who had never seen a brother before.

Meanwhile, the performance began; and some gentlemen, who were behind the scenes, ran to their places: while I, like a child of the house, continued to converse with those of the actors who were not on the stage. Among these, I heard one called Melchior: I was struck with the name; I consid-

ered with attention the person who bore it, and imagined I had seen him somewhere. I at length recollected him to be Melchior Zapata, that poor strolcher, who, as I observed in the first part of my history, soaked crusts of bread in a spring.

Taking him aside accordingly, "I am mistaken (said I) if you are not that Signor Melchior with whom I had the honor to breakfast one day at the side of a clear spring between Valladolid and Segovia. I was in company with a journeyman barber; we had some provisions in a knapsack, which, being joined to yours, made up a pretty little repast, which was seasoned with a thousand agreeable sallies." Zapata having mused some minutes, answered, "You mention a circumstance which I recall without difficulty: I was then returning to Zamora, from having made an unsuccessful attempt on the stage at Madrid: I remember too, that I was in very bad circumstances." "I remember the same thing (said I), by this token, that you wore a jacket lined with play-bills. You see I have not forgot it, no more than that you complained at that time of having too chaste a wife." "Oh! I have no cause to complain of that at present (said Zapata with precipitation), egad! my gossip is very much reformed in that particular; and therefore my jacket is better lined than formerly."

I was going to congratulate him on his wife's reformation, when he was obliged to leave me in order to appear upon the stage. Curious to know his spouse, I made up to an actor, and desired he would show her to me. This he did; saying, "There she is; that is Narcissa, the handsomest of our ladies, your sister excepted." I immediately concluded that this actress must be she in favor of whom the Marquis de Marialva had declared himself before he had seen Estella; and my conjecture was but too true. When the play was over, I conducted Laura to her lodging, where I perceived several cooks preparing a great entertainment. "Thou mayest sup here" (said she). "I won't indeed" (said I); the Marquis, perhaps, will choose to be alone with you." "O! not at all (she replied), he is to be here with two of his friends and one of our gentlemen; and it is in thy own option to make a sixth. Thou knowest that, in the houses of actresses, secretaries have the privilege of eating with their masters." "True (said I), but it would be a little too early for me to put myself on the footing of a favorite secretary: I must first enjoy his confidence before I can merit that honorable privilege." So saying, I left her, and repaired to my eating-house, which I intended to frequent every day, since my master kept no table at home.

CHAPTER IX.

He supped that evening with an extraordinary man; an account of what happened between them.

I OBSERVED in the hall a kind of old monk, clothed in coarse gray cloth, who was at supper all alone in a corner. Sitting down, out of curiosity, just opposite to him, I saluted him very civilly, and he showed himself no less polite. My politeness being brought, I began to dispatch it with a good deal of appetite; and while I ate in silence, I frequently looked at this person, whose eyes I always found fixed on mine. Fatigued with his stubborn perseverance in looking at me, I addressed him in these words: "Father, have we ever seen one another before? You observe me as if I was not altogether unknown to you."

He answered, with great gravity, "My reason for fixing my eyes upon you, is to admire the prodigious variety of adventures which are marked in the features of your face." "I see (said I, with an air of raillery) that your reverence deals in metempsychosis." "I may boast of possessing that art (replied the monk), and of having made presages, which have been verified by the event. I am also skilled in chiromancy, and will venture to say, that my oracles are infallible, when I have compared the inspection of the hand with that of the face."

Although this old man had all the appearance of a wise person, I thought him so foolish that I could not help laughing in his face. Instead of being offended, he smiled at my impoliteness, and continued speaking in these words, after having cast his eyes around the hall, to be assured that nobody listened: "I am not surprised to see you so prejudiced against two sciences which are looked upon as frivolous in this age. The long and painful study which they demand, discourages all the learned men, who renounce and decry them out of despair of acquiring them. For my own part, I am not discouraged by the obscurity in which they are shrouded, no more than by the difficulties which incessantly occur in the search of chemical secrets, and in the wonderful art of transmuting metals into gold.

But I don't consider (added he, recollecting himself), that I speak to a young cavalier to whom my discourse must in effect appear quite chimerical. A sample of my skill will dispose you much better than all I can say, to judge more favorably of my art." With these words, he took out of his pocket a phial full of red liquor; and then said, "Here is an elixir which I composed this morning of the juice of certain plants distilled in an alembic; for I have employed almost all my life, like Democritus, in finding out the properties of minerals and simples. You shall see its virtue put to the proof. The wine which we now drink at supper, though it is execrable, shall become excellent." So saying, he put into my bottle two drops of his elixir, which rendered my wine more delicious than the best that is drank in Spain.

The marvellous strikes the imagination; and when once that is gained, the judgment is no longer used. Charmed with such a fine secret, and persuaded that he must be more than the devil who could find it out, I cried, in a transport of admiration, "Oh, father! pray pardon me, if I took you at first for an old fool; I now do justice to your capacity, and need no more than I have seen to be assured that you could,

if you pleased, convert in an instant a bar of iron into an ingot of gold. How happy should I be, could I possess such an admirable science!" "Heaven preserve you from such an acquisition (said the old man, interrupting me with a profound sigh). You don't know, my son, what a fatal secret you wish for. Instead of envying, rather pity me for having bestowed so much pains to make myself unhappy. I live in continual disquiet. I am afraid of being discovered, and that my labors will be rewarded with perpetual imprisonment. In this apprehension I lead a wandering life, disguised sometimes like a priest or monk, and sometimes like a peasant or cavalier. Is it then an advantage to know how to make gold at that price? and are not riches a real punishment for those persons who cannot enjoy them in tranquillity?"

This discourse seeming to me very sensible, I said to the sage, "There is nothing like a quiet life: you give me a disgust to the philosopher's stone; and I will be contented with learning of you the future events of my life." "With all my heart, child," answered he; "I have already made my remarks on your features: let us now see your hand." I presented it to him with a confidence that will not do me much honor in the opinion of some readers; and he, having examined it with great attention, exclaimed in a fit of enthusiasm, "Ah! what transitions from grief to joy, and from joy to grief! What capricious successions of misfortune and prosperity! But you have already experienced a great deal of these vicissitudes. You have not a great many more afflictions to undergo; and a nobleman will confer upon you an agreeable destiny, not subject to change." After having assured me that I might depend on this prediction, he bade me farewell, and went out of the eating-house, leaving me quite engrossed with the things which I had heard. I did not at all doubt that the Marquis de Marialva was the nobleman in question; and of consequence, nothing seemed more possible than the accomplishment of the oracle. But though I had not seen the least appearance of probability, I could not have helped repose an entire belief in the pretended monk, so much authority had he acquired in my opinion by his elixir. On my side, that I might hasten the happiness that was predicted to me, I resolved to attach myself to the Marquis more than I had done to any of my misters; and having formed this resolution, I retired to our house in a transport of joy that I cannot express. Never did a woman leave a fortune-teller with more satisfaction.

CHAPTER X.

The commission that the Marquis de Marialva gave to Gil Blas, and the manner in which that faithful secretary acquitted himself of it.

THE Marquis was not yet come home from the lodgings of his actress; and I found his valets de chambre playing at primero, in his apartments, expecting his return. I made up to them, and we amused ourselves in making merry till two o'clock in the morning, when our master arrived. He was a little surprised to see me, and said with a gracious air, which made me guess that he returned very well satisfied with his evening's pleasure, "How, Gil Blas! not yet abed?" I answered, that I was first willing to know what orders he had for me. "I shall perhaps (he resumed) give you a commission to-morrow morning; but it will be time enough then to tell you the particulars. Meanwhile, you may go to rest; and henceforth remember, that I dispense with your attendance in the evening, having occasion for nobody but my valets de chambre."

After this explanation, which at bottom gave me a good deal of pleasure, since it spared me a piece of subjection which I should have sometimes felt in a very disagreeable manner, I left the Marquis in his apartment, and retiring to my garret, went to bed; but having no inclination to sleep, it came into my head, that I should follow the advice which Pythagoras gives us, of recollecting at night all that we have done in the day, in order to applaud our good and condemn our bad actions.

I did not find my conscience clear enough to be satisfied with my conduct; but reproached myself with having supported the imposture of Laura. In vain did I suggest an excuse, that I could not in honor give the lie to a girl who had nothing in view but to do me a pleasure, and that in some shape I found myself under a necessity of being an accomplice in the cheat. Little satisfied with this apology, I answered that I ought not then to have pushed things so far; and that I must have a great deal of impudence to live with a nobleman, whose confidence I so ill repaid. In short, after a severe examination, I concluded, that if I was not a rogue, I was next kin to it.

From thence passing to the consequences, I represented to myself that I played a very high game in deceiving a man of quality, who, for my sins, would perhaps soon discover the trick. A reflection so judicious terrified me not a little; but the ideas of pleasure and interest soon dissipated my fear. Besides, the prophecy of the man with the elixir would have been sufficient to remove my doubts. I gave myself up, therefore, to the most agreeable fancies: I formed new rules of arithmetic, to reckon within myself the sum to which my wages would amount at the end of ten years' service. To this I added the gratifications which I should receive from my master; and measuring them by his liberal disposition, or rather by my own desires, I had an interperence of imagination, (if I may be allowed the expression,) which set no bounds to my fortune. I was gradually lulled by so much wealth, and fell asleep in the very act of building castles in Spain.

Next day, I got up at eight o'clock in the morning, to go and receive my patron's orders; but as I opened my door to go out, I was very much surprised to see him appear before me all alone, in his night-cap and morning-gown. "Gil Blas," (said he,) last night, when I left your sister, I promised to be

with her this morning; but an affair of consequence hinders me from keeping my word. Go, and assure her from me, that I am very much mortified at the disappointment, and tell her I shall certainly sup with her in the evening. This is not all, (added he, putting into my hand a purse with a little shagreen box encircled with diamonds,) carry this my picture to her, and keep this purse of fifty pistoles, which I give as a mark of the friendship I have already conceived for you." I took the picture with one hand, and the purse I so little deserved with the other; running instantly to Laura, saying, in the excess of joy with which I was transported, "Good! the prediction is visibly accomplishing. What happiness is it to be the brother of such a handsome and gallant girl! What a pity it is that there is not as much honor as profit and pleasure in it!"

Laura, contrary to the custom of people of her profession, being used to rise early, I surprised her at her toilet; where, in expectation of the Portuguese, she joined to her natural beauty all the auxiliary charms that the art of coquetry could bestow. "Amiable Estella, (said I to her when I entered,) the loadstone of strangers, I may now sit at table with my master, since he has honored me with a commission which gives me that prerogative, and of which I come to acquit myself. He cannot have the pleasure of your company this morning, as he proposed; but, for your consolation, will sup with you at night; and he sends you his picture, which to me seems a matter of still greater consolation."

I accordingly gave her the box, which, by the bright sparkling of the diamonds that adorned it, infinitely rejoiced her eyesight. She opened it, and shutting it again, after having considered the painting superficially, returned to the stones, whose beauty she extolled, saying with a smile, "These are copies which we women of the stage value more than originals."

I then told her that the generous Portuguese, when he instructed me with the picture, had gratified me with a purse of fifty pistoles. "I congratulate thee upon thy good fortune, (said she to me,) this nobleman begins where others even rarely end." "To you, my dear creature (I replied), I owe this present: the Marquis bestowed it upon me solely on account of my being your brother." "I wish (said she) that he would give you as much every day: for I cannot express how dear thou art to me. The very first moment I saw thee, I attached myself to thee by a tie too strong for time to break. When I lost thee at Madrid, I did not despair of finding thee again; and yesterday, when I saw thee, received thee as a man whose fate brought back to my arms. In a word, my friend, heaven has destined us for one another; thou shalt be my husband, but we must first enrich ourselves. I want to have two or three more intrigues to make thee easy for life."

I thanked her in a polite manner for the trouble she intended to take on my account; and we insensibly engaged in a conversation that lasted till noon. Then I retired, to give an account to my master of the manner in which his present was received; and though Laura had given me no instructions on that subject, I did not fail to compose by the way a fine compliment, which I intended to repeat in her name. But when I went home, I was told that the Marquis had gone out; and it was decreed that I should see him no more; as may be perceived in reading the following chapter.

CHAPTER XI.

Gil Blas receives a piece of news which is like a thunderbolt to him.

I REPAIRED to my eating-house, where, meeting two men of a very agreeable conversation, I dined, and sat at table with them till it was time to go to play; then we parted: they went about their own affairs, and I took the road to the theatre. I must observe by the bye, that I had all the reason in the world to be in good humor; mirth had reigned in my conversation with these two gentlemen; my fortune had a most smiling face; and, notwithstanding my spirits sunk without my knowing the reason, and without my being able to keep them up, it was, doubtless, a presage of the misfortune with which I was threatened.

As I entered the green-room, Melchior Zapata came to me, and telling me softly to follow him, carried me into a private place, and addressed me in this manner: "Signor cavalier, I think it my duty to give you a very important piece of intelligence. You know that the Marquis de Marialva had, at first, a passion for Narcissa, my wife; and already appointed a day to come and take a slice of my rib, when the artful Estella found means to break the bargain, and allure the Portuguese nobleman to her own charms. You may well believe that an actress does not lose such a good prey without vexation. My spouse has this affair at heart, and is capable of undertaking any thing to be revenged: she has now a fair occasion. Yesterday, if you remember, all our servants crowded to see you; when the under candle-snuffer told some of the company that he knew you very well, and that you were nothing less than Estella's brother."

"This report (added Melchior) reached the ears of Narcissa, who did not fail to interrogate the author; and he has confirmed his assertion, by telling her that he knew you Arsencia's valet, at the same time that Estella, under the name of Laura, served that actress at Madrid. My wife, charmed with the discovery, will impart it to the Marquis de Marialva, who is to be at the play this evening. Take your measures accordingly: if you are not actually Estella's brother, I advise you as a friend, and on account of our old acquaintance, to provide for your safety. Narcissa, who demands but one victim, has allowed me to give you this notice, that you may prevent any sinister accident by immediate flight."

It would have been superfluous in him to say more of the

matter. I thanked the stage-player for his information, and he easily perceived, by my terrified look, that I was not the man to give the candle-snuffer the lie. I did not feel the least inclination to depend upon my effrontery; I was not even tempted to bid Laura farewell, lest she should have insisted upon my facing it out. I could very well conceive that she was an actress of such skill, as to be able to extricate herself out of the dilemma; but I saw nothing except an infallible chastisement for me, and I was not so much in love as to brave it out. My sole study being, therefore, to escape with my household goods, I mean my baggage, I disappeared from the play-house in a twinkling, and, with the utmost dispatch, caused my portmanteau to be transported to the house of a carrier, who was to set out for Toledo at three o'clock next morning. I could have wished to be with the Count de Polan, whose house seemed my only asylum; but I was not yet there, and I could not, without the utmost uneasiness, think on the time I had to stay in a city where I was afraid they would search for me, even in the night.

I did not, for all that, omit going to supper at my eating-house, although I was as much disturbed as a debtor who knows that there are bailiffs at his heels. What I ate that evening did not, I believe, produce excellent chyle in my stomach. Being the miserable sport of fear, I examined every body that came into the hall; and when, unluckily, any ill-looking fellow entered (a common case in those places), I shivered with dread. Having supped, in the midst of continual alarms, I rose from table, and returned to the carrier's house, where I threw myself on a truss of fresh straw, and lay till the hour of our departure.

Meanwhile my patience was sufficiently exercised. I was attacked with a thousand disagreeable reflections; when I chanced to slumber, I beheld the furious Marquis mangle the fair face of Laura with blows, and demolishing every thing in her house; or heard him order his servants to make me perish under the basinado. Then starting, I awoke; and though to wake is usually a great comfort after such a terrible dream, waking was to me more dreadful than the dream itself. Happily for me, the carrier delivered me from my affliction, by giving me notice that his mules were ready. I was immediately a-foot, and, thank heaven, set out radically cured of chiromancy and Laura. In proportion as we moved from Grenada, my mind resumed its tranquillity; and I began to enter into conversation with the carrier. I laughed at some pleasant stories he recounted, and lost, insensibly, all my fear. I enjoyed a sound sleep at Ubeda, where we lay the first night, and on the fourth arrived at Toledo.

My first care was to ask a direction for the Count de Polan's house, whither I repaired, very well persuaded that he would not suffer me to lodge in any other place: but I reckoned without my host; for I found nobody at home but the housekeeper, who told me that his master had set out in the evening for the castle of Leyva, having received a message that Seraphina was dangerously ill.

I did not expect the absence of the Count, which diminished the joy I felt in being at Toledo, and induced me to take another resolution. Finding myself so near Madrid, I resolved to go thither; reflecting that I might push myself at court, where a superior genius, as I had heard, was not absolutely necessary to make a fortune. The very next day I took the advantage of a return-horse for that capital of Spain; and fortune conducted me thither, in order to make me act higher parts than those which I had hitherto performed.

CHAPTER XII.

Gil Blas takes lodgings in a house where he contracts an acquaintance with Captain Chinchilla. The character of that officer; with an account of the affair that brought him to Madrid.

ON my first arrival at Madrid, I fixed my habitation in a house that was let into lodgings, where lived, among other people, an old captain, who had come from the farther end of New Castile, to solicit at court for a pension, which he thought he had too well deserved. His name was Don Hannibal de Chinchilla. It was not without astonishment that I beheld him for the first time, being a man turned of sixty, of a gigantic stature, and extremely meagre. He wore a pair of thick whiskers, that curled up to his temples on each side. Over and above his want of a leg and arm, a large plaster of green silk supplied the place of one eye; and the scars of many wounds appeared on his face. These things excepted, he was pretty much like another man. Besides, he had a good deal of understanding, and still more gravity; was scrupulous in his morals, and, in particular, piqued himself on his delicacy in point of honor.

After having conversed with him two or three times, he honored me with his confidence. I soon became acquainted with all his affairs. He recounted to me on what occasion he had left an eye at Naples, an arm in Lombardy, and a leg in the Low Countries. What I admired in his narration of battles and sieges was, that not one gasconade escaped him, nor even a word in his own praise; though I could have willingly pardoned him for boasting of the half of himself that remained, as an indemnification for the other half that he had lost. Those officers who return from the wars safe and sound are seldom so modest.

But he told me the thing that gave him the most concern was, that he had spent a considerable estate in his campaigns; so that now his whole fortune was reduced to about a hundred ducats a year, which was scarce sufficient to maintain his whiskers, clear his lodging, and pay for the writing his memorials. "For in short, Signor cavalier, (added he, shrugging up his shoulders,) I present one, thank God, every day, without being favored with the least notice. One would say that there is a wager between the prime minister and me, which of us shall first fail, I in giving or he in

receiving them. I have also had the honor to present several to his majesty; but the curate sings no better than his clerk; and in the mean time, my castle of Chinchilla sinks into ruins for want of repair."

"We must despair of nothing," said I to the captain; you are now perhaps on the eve of seeing all your toils and troubles repaid with interest. "I ought not to flatter myself with that hope," replied Don Hannibal; three days are not yet elapsed since I spoke to one of the minister's secretaries, and, if I may believe what he said, I may make myself very easy. "And pray, what did he say? (I replied;) did he pretend that you were not worthy of a recompense?" "You shall judge," resumed Chinchilla. The secretary told me, very plainly, 'Master What-d'ye-call-'um, don't brag so much of your zeal and fidelity. You have done no more than your duty in exposing yourself to danger in behalf of your country. The glory alone which attends brave actions is a sufficient recompense, and ought to satisfy a Spaniard in particular. You must undeceive yourself, therefore, if you look on the gratification you solicit as a debt due to your valor. Provided it be granted to you, you will owe it entirely to the favor and generosity of the king, who is pleased to think himself indebted to those of his subjects who have distinguished themselves in the services of the state.' You see by this (pursued the captain) that I am still in his debt; and that, in all likelihood, I shall return as rich as I came."

One naturally interests himself for a brave man in adversity. I encouraged him to persevere, and offered to write his memorials gratis. I went even so far as to offer him my purse, and to conjure him to take out of it what money he wanted. But he was none of those who never wait for a second invitation on these occasions. On the contrary, he showed himself very delicate on this point, and thanked me, in a lofty manner, for my good-will. He afterwards told me, that rather than be a burden to any body, he had accustomed himself, by degrees, to live so frugally, that the least nourishment was sufficient for his subsistence. This was but too true; his whole food consisted of leeks and onions; and therefore he was nothing but skin and bone. That he might have no witness of his wretched repast, he used to lock himself up in his chamber at meals. I obtained of him, however, by dint of entreaty, that we should dine and sup together; and deceiving his pride by an ingenious compassion, ordered more victuals and liquor than I had occasion for to be brought, and urged him to eat and drink. At first he stood upon ceremony, but at length he yielded to my entreaties. After which, becoming insensibly more bold, he, of himself, assisted me in clearing my plate and emptying my bottle.

When he had drank four or five draughts, and reconciled his stomach to good nourishment; "Truly (said he, with an air of gaiety), you are very bewitching, Signor Gil Blas, you make me do what you please; your behavior diverts me of all fear of abusing your beneficent disposition." My captain, at that time, seemed so well rid of shame, that if I had laid hold of the opportunity of pressing him again to accept my purse, I believe he would not have refused it. But I did not put him to the trial; contenting myself with having made him my messmate; and with taking the trouble not only of writing his memorials, but also of helping him to compose them. By means of having copied homilies, I had learned to turn a period, and was become a kind of author. The old officer, on his part, piqued himself on his knowledge of composition; so that, exerting ourselves together, through emulation, we produced morsels of eloquence, worthy of the most celebrated masters of Salamanca. But in vain did each of us exhaust his genius, in sowing flowers of rhetoric in those memorials; it was no better, as the saying is, than sowing them on sand. Whatever expedient we fell upon to enhance the services of Don Hannibal, the court paid no regard to it. A circumstance that did not at all engage the old invalid to make the eulogium of those officers who ruin themselves in the field. In this bad humor he cursed his fate, and wished Naples, Lombardy, and the Low Countries, at the devil.

To complete his mortification, it happened one day, that, under his very nose, a poet, introduced by the duke d'Alva, having rehearsed, in the presence, an ode on the birth of an Infanta, was gratified with a pension of five hundred ducats. I believe the mained captain would have run mad on this occasion, had I not been at great pains to recompose him. "What is the matter?" said I, seeing him quite beside himself; there is nothing in this that ought to give you uneasiness. Has it not been the privilege of poets, from immemorial, to make princes pay tribute to the Muse? There is not a crowned head in the world that does not gratify one of those gentlemen with a pension; and, between you and me, these sort of rewards, being generally transmitted to the knowledge of posterity, immortalize the liberality of kings; whereas the other recompenses which they bestow, are often but so much loss to their reputation. How many rewards did Augustus dispense? How many pensions did he grant, of which we have not the least intimation? But the most remote posterity will always know, as we do, that Virgil received near two hundred thousand crowns from the bounty of that emperor."

Notwithstanding all I could say to Don Hannibal, the fruits of the ode stuck in his stomach like lead; and as he could not digest it, he resolved to abandon the whole of his pursuit. But first, being willing, as his last effort, to present one other memorial to the duke of Lerma, we went together to the house of that prime minister, where we met a young man, who having saluted the captain, said to him, with an affectionate air, "My dear old master, is it you? what affair has brought you hither? If you have occasion for a person of interest with his highness, pray command me; I offer to you my good offices." "How, Pedrillo!" (replied the captain;) to hear you talk, one would imagine you enjoy some important post in this family." "I have, at least (answered the young man,) power enough to be of service to an honest

country gentleman like you." "If that be the case, (said the officer, with a smile,) I have recourse to your protection." "It is granted, (resumed Pedrillo;) let me know what is the business, and I promise you shall get some snips out of the minister."

We had no sooner communicated the affair to this benevolent young fellow, than he asked where Don Hannibal lodged; in which being satisfied, he assured us that we should hear of him next day; and then disappeared, without giving us the least hint of what he intended to do, or even telling us whether or no he belonged to the duke of Lerma. I was curious to know who this Pedrillo was that seemed so sprightly. "He is a young fellow (said the captain) who served me some years ago, and who, seeing me in want, left me to go in quest of a better place. I don't blame him for that: it is very natural for one to change for the better. He is a wag, who does not want understanding, and is as intriguing as the devil; but in spite of all his art, I don't depend a great deal upon the zeal which he has expressed in my behalf." "Who knows (said I) but he may be of some use? If he belongs, for example, to some one of the duke's principal officers, he may have it in his power to do you service. You are not ignorant that every thing is carried, among the great, by cabal and intrigue; that they have favorite domestics, who lead them by the nose; and that these again, in their turn, are governed by their own valets."

Next morning Pedrillo coming to our lodgings, "Gentlemen, (said he,) if I did not explain myself yesterday, on the means I have of serving captain Chinchilla, it was because we were not in a place proper for such an explanation. Besides, I was willing to sound the business before I disclosed it to you. You must know then, that I am the lacquey and confidant of Signor Rodrigo de Calderona, the duke of Lerma's first secretary. My master, who is very much addicted to gallantry, sups every evening with an Arragouian nightingale, who he keeps engaged near the court. She is a very handsome girl, from Albarazin, of good understanding, and sings to admiration; therefore she is called Signora Sirena. As I carry a billet-dou to her every morning, I have just now seen her; I have proposed that she shall make Don Hannibal pass for her uncle, and on that supposition engage her gallant to protect him. She is willing to undertake the affair; for, besides the small advantage she foresees in it for herself, she will be extremely glad to be thought the niece of a brave gentleman."

Signor de Chinchilla made very faces at this proposal, and expressed a reluctance in making himself an accomplice of such a prank; and still more, in suffering a she-adventurer to dishonor his family, by saying she belonged to it. He was disgusted at it, not only on account of himself, but also reproved in it (if I may be allowed the expression), a retroactive ignominy upon all his ancestors. This delicacy seemed very unreasonable to Pedrillo, who, being shocked at it, exclaimed, "You jest, sure, to take it in that view. You are such a set of people, your cottage squires, your vanity is quite ridiculous. Signor cavalier (he pursued, addressing himself to me), are you not surprised at the scruples he makes? Egad! it is a fine thing indeed to stand on such punctilios at court! Fortune is never neglected there, whatever shape it assumes."

I approved of what Pedrillo said, and we harangued the captain so successfully, that we prevailed upon him, in spite of himself, to become Sirena's uncle. When we had gained this victory over his pride, we laid all our three heads together, in order to compose a new memorial for the minister, and it was revised, augmented, and corrected accordingly. I then wrote it out fair, and Pedrillo carried it to the Arragouian lady, who, that very evening, put it into the hands of Signor Don Rodrigo, to whom she spoke in such a manner, that the secretary, believing her really the captain's niece, promised to exert himself in his behalf. A few days after we saw the effect of this work. Pedrillo came to our lodging with an air of triumph: "Good news (said he to Chinchilla), the king is going to make a distribution of governments, benefices, and pensions, in which you shall not be forgot. But I am ordered to ask what present you intend to make to Sirena. As for my own part, I declare I'll have nothing at all. I prefer the pleasure of having contributed towards bettering my old master's fortune, to all the gold in the world. But this is not the case of our nymph of Albarazin: she is a little Jewishly inclined, when the business is to oblige her neighbors; she would take money of her own father; so you may judge if she will refuse it from a pretended uncle."

Let her mention her demand (replied Don Hannibal); she shall, if she pleases, have yearly one third of the pension I obtain; and that ought to satisfy her, if the whole revenues of his Catholic Majesty were concerned in the bargain. "For my own part (replied Don Rodrigo's Mercury), I would cheerfully rely upon your word, because I know the value of it; but you have to do with a little creature who is naturally distrustful; besides, she would much rather have, once for all, two thirds of the product advanced in ready money." "Where the devil does she think I shall find it (cried the officer, hastily interrupting him); does she think that I am a money broker? It seems you have not made her acquainted with my situation." "Pardon me (replied Pedrillo), she knows very well that you are as poor as Job: after what I told her, she cannot be ignorant of your circumstances. But don't give yourself any trouble about the matter, I am a man fertile in expedients. I know an old rogue of a lawyer, who takes pleasure in lending money at ten per cent. You shall make an assignment, with security to him, before a notary, of the first year of your pension, for the like sum, which you shall acknowledge to have received from him, and which you will touch in effect, the interest included. With regard to the security, the lender will be contented with your castle of

Chinchilla, such as it is; so that we shall have no dispute upon that score."

The captain protested that he would accept of the conditions, if he should be lucky enough to have any share in the favors which were to be distributed next day. And he was not disappointed; being gratified with a pension of three hundred pistoles on a certain government. As soon as he understood this piece of news, he gave all the security that was demanded, transacted his little affairs, and returned to New Castle, with some pistoles in his pocket.

CHAPTER XIII.

Gil Blas meets his dear friend Fabricius at court; their mutual joy; they repair together to a certain place, where a curious conversation happens between them.

I CONTRACTED a custom of going every morning to court, where I commonly spent two or three hours in seeing the grantees pass and repass, though they appeared there without that splendor which surrounds them in other places.

One day as I walked to and fro, and strutted through the apartments, making, like many others, a foolish figure enough, I perceived Fabricius, whom I had left at Valladolid, in the service of an hospital director. What astonished me was, that he talked familiarly to the duke of Medina Sidonia and the Marquis of Santa Cruz. Nay, these two noblemen seemed to listen to him with pleasure, and he was as well dressed as a man of quality. Am I not mistaken, said I to myself; can this be the son of barber Nunnez; perhaps it is some young courtier who resembles him? I did not long remain in doubt; the noblemen went away, and I accosted Fabricius. He knew me at first sight; and after having made me squeeze through the crowd with him, to get out of the apartments, "My dear Gil Blas (said he, embracing me), I am rejoiced to see you again. How art thou employed at Madrid? art thou still in service? or hast thou some post at court? Give me an account of all that has happened to thee since thy precipitate retreat from Valladolid." "You ask me a great many questions at once, (said I,) and we are not now in a proper place to relate adventures." "Thou art in the right, (he replied,) we shall be more at liberty in my lodgings. Come, I will show you the way; it is not far from hence. I am quite my own master, agreeably lodged, perfectly easy in my circumstances. I am contented with my situation, and happy because I think myself so."

I accepted the proposal, and followed Fabricius, who stopped before a very fine house, where he told me he lodged. We crossed a court, where, on one side, there was a great staircase that led to very superb apartments, and on the other a small flight, equally dark and narrow, by which we ascended to the lodging he had so well extolled. It consisted of one room only, which my ingenious friend had divided into four, by thin deal boards. The first served as an anti-chamber to the second, where he lay; he made a closet of the third, and a kitchen of the last. The chamber and anti-chamber were lined with maps and theses of philosophy, and the furniture was suitable to this kind of hanging; consisting of a large brocade bed, very much worn, old chairs covered with yellow serge, garnished with a fringe of Grenada silk of the same color; a table with gilt feet, covered with leather that seemed to be once red, and bordered by a finsel fringe becoming black by the lapse of time; with an ebony cupboard, adorned with figures carved in relief. He had, instead of a bureau, in his closet, a little table; and his library was composed of some books, with several bundles of paper, lying on shelves, placed above one another along the wall. His kitchen, which was conformable to the rest, contained some earthenware, and other necessary utensils.

Fabricius, after having given me time to consider his apartment, said, "What dost thou think of my lodging and economy; art thou enchanted with them?" "Yes, faith, (I replied smiling,) I am so. Thou must have certainly played thy cards well at Madrid to be so well furnished. Thou, doubtless, enjoyest some post." "Heaven forbid! (replied he,) the business I follow is above all employments whatever. A man of fashion, to whom this house belongs, gave me a room, which I have divided into four, and furnished, as thou seest. I meddle with nothing but what gives me pleasure, and feel not the cravings of necessity." "Pray be more explicit (said I, interrupting him), you irritate the desire I have of knowing what you do." "Well (said he), thou shalt be satisfied. I am turned author, and have commenced wit; I write in verse as well as in prose, and am equally good at every thing."

"Thou a favourite of Apollo! (cried I, laughing.) This is what I never could have divined. I should have been much less surprised to have found thee in a quite contrary situation. What charms couldst thou find in the condition of a poet? methinks these people are commonly despised in civil life, and are far from having an established ordinary." "O fy, (cried he in his turn,) then talkest of those miserable authors, whose works are the refuse of libraries and players. Is it to be wondered at, that such writers are not esteemed? But good authors, my friend, are on a better footing in the world; and I may say, without vanity, that I am one of that number." "I don't at all doubt it (said I:) thou art a young fellow of excellent genius. That which is composed by thee cannot be bad. All that I am at a loss to know, is, how thou wast first seized with the rage of rhyme."

"Thy surprise is just (replied Nunnez); I was so well satisfied with my situation while in the service of Don Manuel Ordomez, that I did not so much as wish for any other. But my genius rising by degrees, like that of Plautus, above servitude, I composed a comedy, which was acted by the company who performed at Valladolid. Although it was not worth a fig, it met with great success; from whence I concluded that the public was a good mich cov, which easily

parted with its store. This reflection, joined to the furious desire of composing new pieces, detached me from the hospital. The love of poetry banished my passion for riches; and resolving to repair to Madrid, as the centre of wit, in order to form my taste, I demanded my dismissal from the director, who did not grant it without regret, so much affection had he conceived for me. 'Fabricius (said he), hast thou any cause to be dissatisfied?' 'No, Sir (I replied); you are the best of masters; and I am penetrated with your generosity. But, you know, one must follow his destiny. I find I am born to eternize my name by works of genius.' 'What folly possesses thee! (resumed the good citizen,) thou hast already taken foot in the hospital, and art of that kind of wood of which stewards and even directors are made. Thou art going to leave what is solid, in order to employ thyself in trifles; and thou wilt soon repent of thy imprudence, my child.'

'The director, seeing that he opposed my design to no purpose, paid my wages, and, over and above, made me a present of fifty ducats, as a recompense for my valuable services: so that with this, and what I found means to glean in the little commissions that were intrusted to my integrity, I was in a condition, on my arrival at Madrid, to appear in a very handsome manner. This I failed not to do; though the writers of our nation don't much pique themselves on their neat appearance. I soon became acquainted with Lope de Vega,* Miguel Cervantes de Saavedra,† and other famous authors; but in preference to these great men, I chose for my preceptor a young bachelor of Cordova, the incomparable Don Lewis de Gongora, the finest genius that ever Spain produced. He will not allow his works to be printed in his lifetime, but contents himself with reading them to his friends; and, what is very remarkable, nature has endowed him with the rare talent of succeeding in all kinds of poetry. He chiefly excels in satire, which is indeed his main strength. He is not (like Lucilius) a muddy river, that sweeps along with its abundance of slime; but rather the Tagus, that rolls over golden sands its limpid stream. 'Thou darrest (said I to Fabricius) an agreeable picture of this same bachelor; and I don't doubt that a person of such merit has a great number of envious enemies.'—'All our authors (he replied), good as well as bad, inveigh bitterly against him. He delights, says one, in bombast, pithy metaphors, and transposition. His verses, saith another, are as obscure as those which the Salian priests sung in their processions, and which nobody understood. Others again find fault with his composing sometimes sonnets, or romances, sometimes comedies, stanzas, and acrostics; as if he had foolishly undertaken to eclipse all the great masters in their own different ways. But all these efforts of jealousy are baffled by a muse that is cherished by all ranks of people, from the highest to the lowest.'

'It was under this skillful master that I served my apprenticeship, and I dare say, it has appeared; for I have so happily imbibed his genius, that I have already composed some detached pieces which he would not blush to father. I opened my ware (according to his example) in the houses of the great, where I am wonderfully well received, and have to do with people who are not difficult to please. 'Tis true, indeed, my successful beginning has been of no disservice to my later compositions. In short, I am beloved by several noblemen, and in particular live with the Duke de Medina Sidonia, as Horace once lived with Mæcenas. You see (added Fabricius) in what manner I was metamorphosed into an author. I have nothing else to relate; so that it is now thy turn, Gil Blas, to rehearse thy exploits.'

I opened accordingly, and suppressing every trivial circumstance, gave him the detail he desired: after which, it being dinner-time, he took out of his ebony cupboard a couple of napkins, some bread, the remains of a shoulder of roast mutton, a bottle of excellent wine, and we sat down to table with all the gaiety of two friends who meet after a long separation. 'Thou seest (said he) my free and independent life: I might if I would, go and dine every day with the people of quality; but, besides that the poetic inclination keeps me sometimes at home, I am a sort of an Aristippus; and can equally accommodate myself to company and solitude, to affluence and frugality.' We liked the wine so well, that there was a necessity of taking another bottle from the store; and towards the end of the repast I expressed a desire of seeing some of his productions. He immediately searched among his papers for a sonnet, which he read aloud with great emphasis. Nevertheless, in spite of the charms of his reading, I found the performance so obscure, that I could not comprehend the meaning of one syllable. Perceiving my ignorance, 'This sonnet (said he) does not seem very clear to thy apprehension; is it not so?' I owned to him that I could have wished it had been more plain. Upon which, he fell a laughing at my expense. 'If this sonnet (he resumed) is not intelligible, so much the better. The natural and simple won't do for sonnets, odes, and other works that require the sublime. The sole merit of these is in their obscurity; and it is sufficient if the poet himself thinks he understands them.' 'You joke, friend, (said I, interrupting him,) good sense and perspicuity ought to be ingredients in poetry of all kinds whatever; and if the incomparable Gongora writes not more plainly than thou dost, I confess my opinion of him sinks apace. He must be a poet who can never deceive any other age than his own. Let us now have a specimen of thy prose.' Hereupon, Nunnez produced a

* Lope Felix de Vega Carpio, a renowned dramatic poet, as much admired by the Spaniards as Shakespeare (with whom he was cotemporary) is by the English. He composed eighteen hundred pieces for the stage, in verse, besides many other works that proclaim the fruitfulness of his genius.
† Miguel Cervantes de Saavedra, the celebrated author of Don Quixote.

preface, which (he said) he intended to prefix to a collection of comedies that he had then in the press; and having read it, asked my opinion. 'I am (said I) no better pleased with thy prose than with thy poetry. Thy sonnet is a piece of verbose fustian; and thy preface is composed of far-fetched expressions, words that have not the public stamp, perplexed phrases; in a word, thy style is quite peculiar to thyself; and the books of our best authors, ancient as well as modern, are written in a quite different manner.' 'Poor ignoramus! (cried Fabricius,) thou dost not know then, that every prosaic writer who now aspires at the reputation of a delicate pen, affects that singularity of style, and those odd expressions, which shock thee so much. There are of us five or six bold innovators, who have undertaken to make a thorough change in the language; and we will accomplish it (please God) in spite of Lope de Vega, Cervantes, and all the fine geniuses who cavil at our new modes of speech. We are seconded by a number of partisans of distinction, and have even some theologians in our cabal.'

'After all (added he) our design is commendable; and, prejudice apart, we are more valuable than those natural writers, who speak like the common run of mankind. I don't know for what reason they are esteemed by so many persons of honor. Their manner was proper enough at Athens or Rome, where there was no distinction in point of speaking; so that Socrates said to Alcibiades, the people was an excellent schoolmaster: but at Madrid we have both a good and bad language, and our courtiers express themselves quite otherwise than our citizens, believe me. In short, our new style overtops that of our antagonists. I will, by one example, make thee perceive the difference between the gentility of our diction and the flatness of theirs. They would say, quite plainly (for instance), 'Interludes embellish a comedy.' While we, with more spirit, would pronounce 'Interludes create beauty in a comedy.' Take notice of that, 'create beauty.' Dost thou perceive all the brilliancy, all the delicacy, all the prettiness of the expression?' I interrupted my innovator with a loud laugh. 'Go, Fabricius, (said I,) thou art quite an original with thy precious language.' 'And thou (answered he) art no better than a beast, with thy natural style. Go, (said he, repeating the words of the archbishop of Grenada,) go and tell my treasurer to give you a hundred ducats; and heaven direct you with that sum! Adieu, Mr. Gil Blas; I wish you a great deal of good fortune, with a little more taste.'

I redoubled my mirth at this sally; and Fabricius, forgiving me for having spoken so irreverently of his writings, lost nothing of his good humor. We finished our second bottle, and getting up from table in a pretty good trim, went out with an intent to walk in the Prado; but passing by the door of a tavern, we took it in our heads to go in.

This place was usually frequented by good company; and I observed in two separate halls a great many cavaliers amusing themselves in different diversions. In one, they played at draughts and primero; and in the other, ten or twelve persons were listening very attentively to a dispute between two professed wits. We had no occasion to go near them, in order to learn that a metaphysical proposition was the subject of their dispute; for they talked with such warmth and transport, that they looked like people possessed. I imagine if Eleazar's ring had been put under their noses, we should have seen devils issue with their breath. 'Good God (said I to my companion), what passion! what lings! These disputants were certainly born to be public criers. The greatest part of mankind are misplaced.' 'Yes, truly, (he replied;) these people seem to be of the race of Novius,† that Roman banker, whose voice exceeded the noise of carmen. But (added he) what gives me the greatest disgust at their discourse is, that our ears are stunned to no purpose.' We removed at a distance from those vociferous metaphysicians, and by that expedient I prevented a violent headache which had begun to seize me. We went and sat down in the corner of the other hall, whence, while we drank refreshing liquors, we examined the cavaliers as they came in and went out, as Nunnez knew almost all of them. 'Egad! (cried he,) the dispute of our philosophers won't be soon over: here are fresh reinforcements arriving: these three men will engage in the fray. But seest thou those two originals going out? That little, swarthy, withered creature, whose lank straight hair falls down in equal portions before and behind, is called Don Julian de Vellannuno; and is a young judge who affects the beau: one of my friends and I going to dine with him to-day, surprised him in a pretty singular occupation. He was diverting himself in his closet, by throwing away the writings of a process of which he is to make a report, and make a grayhound bring them back again to him; while the dog tore them to pieces very handsomely. The name of that licentiate with the copper nose, who accompanies him, is Don Cherubin Tonto, a canon of the church of Toledo, the weakest mortal in the world: though by his sprightly smiling air, you would imagine he had a great deal of wit. He has bright sparkling eyes, with an arch malicious sneer;

* Eleazar, a famous mathematician, who cast out devils, by trying to the nose of the possessed a certain mystical ring, which the demon no sooner smelled than he overtook and abandoned the patient. He performed before the emperor Vespasian; and in order to show the power he had over the devil, commanded him to overeat a pitcher of water. This the demon immediately complied with to the astonishment of all present.

† Novius, whom Mr. Le Sage honors with the title of banker, was no other than a rank usurer, who, from being a slave, came to be a rich citizen of Rome. Horace, who has perpetuated his infamy, has also immortalized the loudness of his voice, in the sixth satire of his first book:

Concurrantque foro tra iunera magna sonabit
Corruu quod vincant tubæ—

so that one would be apt to think him a wag. When he hears a delicate performance read, he listens with such attention as seems full of understanding, and all the while comprehends nothing at all of the matter. He dined with us at the judge's house, where an infinite number of witty things were said: but he spoke never a word, though he applauded them with grimaces and gestures that seemed even superior to the sallies that we uttered.'

'Dost thou know (said I to Nunnez) these two shabby fellows, who, with their elbows on the table, sit in the corner, and converse together in whispers?' 'No, (said he,) their faces are quite unknown to me; but in all likelihood they are coffee-house politicians, who censure the government. Mind that genteel cavalier, who whistles as he walks through the hall, and supports himself sometimes on one foot, sometimes on another: that is Don Augustin Moreto, a young poet, who was born with some genius, but flatterers and ignorant people have almost turned his brain. The man whom he accosts is one of his confederates, who is also moon-struck, and rhymes in prose.'

'More authors still! (cried he, showing me two well-dressed men coming in,) one would think they had made a rendezvous here, to pass in review before thee. These are Don Bernard Desseguado, and Don Sebastian de Villa Viciosa. The first is a genius full of gall, an author born under the planet Saturn, a malicious mortal, whose pleasure consists in hating all the world, and is himself beloved by nobody. As for Don Sebastian, he is a young fellow of candor, who will let nothing lie upon his conscience; he lately brought a performance on the stage, which had an extraordinary run: and now he has printed it, that he may no longer abuse the esteem of the public.'

The charitable pupil of Gongora was going on in explaining the figures of this picture, which shifted so often to the view; when a gentleman belonging to the Duke de Medina Sidonia came and interrupted him, saying, 'Signior Don Fabricio, I was looking for you, in order to let you know that his Grace would speak with you immediately at his own house. Nunnez, who knew that a grandee's wishes cannot be too soon satisfied, quitted me in a trice, to go and wait upon his Mæcenas; while I remained very much astonished to hear him honored with the appellation of Don, and see him thus become noble, in despite of his sire, master Crysostrum, the barber.'

CHAPTER XIV.

Fabricius introduces Gil Blas to the service of Count Galiano, a Sicilian nobleman.

I was so desirous of seeing Fabricius again, that I visited him early next morning. 'Good morrow, (said I, when I entered,) Signior Don Fabricio, the flower, or rather glow-worm, of the Asturian nobility!' At these words he laughed heartily. 'Thou hast observed then (cried he) that I am dubbed a Don?' 'Yes, Mr. Gentleman, (I replied;) and give me leave to tell you, that when you recounted your metamorphosis yesterday, you forgot the best part of it.' 'I did so, (answered he;) but truly, if I have assumed that honorable title, it was not so much with a view to gratify my own vanity, as to accommodate myself to that of others. Thou knowest the humor of the Spaniards: they make no account of an honest man if he has the misfortune to be both poor and mean born. I must tell thee too, that I see so many people call themselves Don Francisco, Don Pedro, or Don what-you-will, that if there is no cheat in the case, thou wilt allow nobility to be a very common thing, and agree, that a plebeian of merit honors it by his association. But let us change the subject, (added he;) last night I supped at the Duke de Medina Sidonia's, where, among other guests, was Count Galiano, a Sicilian nobleman of the first rank; and the conversation turning on the ridiculous effects of self-love, I, charmed that I had it in my power to entertain the company on that subject, regaled them with the story of the homies. Thou mayest well imagine they laughed heartily, and censured the archbishop as he deserved. This produced no bad effect for thee: for thou wast piqued by every body; and Count Galiano, after having asked a good many questions concerning thee, to which thou mayest believe I made suitable answers, desired me to bring thee to his house. I was just now going in quest of thee, to conduct thee thither. I suppose he intends to offer thee the place of one of his secretaries; and I advise thee to accept of it. The Count is rich, and spends like an ambassador, at Madrid: he is come to court, it is said, to confer with the Duke of Lerma about the crown demesnes which that minister designs to alienate in Sicily. In short, Count Galiano, though a Sicilian, seems to be generous, just, and open; and thou canst not do better than attach thyself to him; he is the man, in all probability, who is destined to enrich thee, according to what was foretold in thy behalf at Grenada.'

'I had resolved (said I to Nunnez) to live at large a little, and enjoy myself a good while, before I should go to service again: but thou speakest to me of this Sicilian count in such a manner as induces me to change my resolution, and even to wish I was already in his family.' 'Thou mayest soon be there (he replied), or I am much mistaken.' At the same time we went out together to the Count, who lodged in the house of his friend Don Sancho d'Avila, then in the country.

We found in the count a great number of pages and footmen, clothed in a lively equally rich and gay; and in the chamber several ushers, gentlemen, and other officers, all magnificently dressed, but withal so ugly, that they looked like a company of apes in Spanish garb. There are figures, both of men and women, on which all art is thrown away.

Don Fabricius having sent in his name, was immediately introduced into a room, whither I followed him; and found the Count in his morning-gown sitting on a sofa, and drink-

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